

Headteacher

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**Coloma Convent Girls' School**  
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CR9 5AS

Dear Parents/Carers

We are pleased to inform you that Coloma run a cashless catering system.

The 'biometric' system will recognise the thumb of your child at the tills,  
Incorporates the latest technology and eliminates the need for your child to carry cash.  
The system is more efficient, faster and ultimately provides a better quality service.

Payments for canteen purchases need to be made online via ParentPay - as per all other school purchases, so please ensure money is paid in advance on a regular basis (daily/weekly/monthly) and your child's dinner money account in ParentPay is kept 'topped-up'.

**No cash can be accepted.**

ParentPay activation letters with login details will be sent to you in advance of your daughter starting school.

Please inform your child how much you will budgeted for them to spend per day for Breakfast, Break and Lunch, as the system will allow them to buy purchases up to the set daily 'spend limit' of £8.50 (although you can increase or decrease this for your child by writing in with your chosen spend limit, to your child's Key Stage Co-ordinator).

You will need to 'Opt In' for your child to use the Biometric system (as per legislation) by completing and returning the attached form with your physical signature

**Please ensure the response form is returned in advance,  
even if your child is not planning on using the canteen**

so we know your choice.

The information following this letter should answer any questions you may have, but if this is not the case please feel free to contact the School Business Manager, c/o the school.

We look forward to receiving your signed Biometric permission form as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Johnson  
Headteacher



## Just some of the benefits of a Cashless Catering System

- Increased speed of service reducing queuing times
- Increased uptake on Free School Meals & Anonymity on Free School Meals
- Facility to pay online
- Visible records of your child's spend and the items they are purchasing
- No carrying of cash, preventing loss of money
- Automatic 'allergy' alerts to stop pupils purchasing specific items
- Pupils learn about important lifestyle control by monitoring their own accounts
- Reporting facilities help decrease wastage and improve the overall efficiency of the meal service

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# Cashless Systems and Identification Software

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q What is a cashless system?**

A *A Cashless Catering System is purposely designed to alleviate the need for pupils to bring cash into school. The system allows us to provide our pupils with a faster, more efficient and more appealing meal service.*

**Q What is 'biometric'?**

A *Biometric is simply a method of identifying an individual person using an algorithm based scan, which reads between 50 and 130 points on the finger or thumb. It is not a fingerprint in any way, shape or form and is of use only in the Cashless System.*

**Q How does a biometric system work?**

A *The algorithm information from the pupil will be stored on a secure biometric controller within the school, in line with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Only our Cashless Catering Till System provider (Nationwide Retain Systems) can access this information with permission from the school. Once permission is received and a pupil's account is credited with money online via a Cashless Payment System (ParentPay), the pupil will place their finger/thumb on the Biometric Reader, which uses their information to look up their dinner money account and allow them to purchase items.*

**Q How will my child be registered on the biometric system?**

A *Having received your permission in advance, your child will be required to place their finger/thumb on the Biometric Reader to obtain an algorithm based scan. If you have chosen to opt-out of this procedure, your child will be registered without using biometrics, as below.*

**Q How else can my child register?**

A *Pupils can use their Oyster card to be 'tagged' to their dinner money account. This means that they will need to carry their Oyster cards with them during break times to be able to make purchases. Without biometric consent, or an oyster card, we can search for your daughter manually – although this takes longer than the above methods.*

**Q How much money should I budget for my child to spend?**

A *This is your choice but a guide is £2.00 for breakfast, £2.50 for break, £4.00 for lunch.*

**Q Can I change my child's 'daily spend limit'?**

A *Yes – the amount your child can spend in one day can be changed from £8.50 per day by writing to your child's Key Stage Co-ordinator.*

**Q What happens if my child's account does not have enough money on it?**

A *Your child will be allowed to purchase 1 meal without money on their account, pay this back in ParentPay and top-up the account before any further purchases can be made.*

**Q How can I see my child's meal intake?**

A *This can be viewed by you, in ParentPay.*

**Q My child has an allergy. Can this be monitored through the new system?**

A *Yes – all allergy records registered with the school, will automatically be on the Cashless Catering System. When pupils attempt to purchase an item, which contains ingredients that they are allergic to, the system will alert the till user who will inform the child.*



**Q Can I dictate my child's dietary requirements?**

**A** *The system will allow you to register any items that your child cannot consume due to dietary needs or religious reasons. Any such items must be confirmed in writing to your child's Key Stage Co-ordinator.*

**Q What methods of payment can be used to credit the Catering Company's account?**

**A** *Online Payments*

*ParentPay – As per payments for all other school purchases, payments for canteen purchases need to be made online via ParentPay ([www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com) activation letters to follow).*

*PayPoint - If you cannot pay online you can pay via a PayPoint store for canteen purchases only, using a ParentPay card costing £1.50. To order a card please send £1.50 in cash to be posted in the Finance box, near the First Aid room. The £1.50 cash should be placed in a sealed envelope titled 'Paypoint Card' with your child's name and tutor group. **It can take up to 3 weeks for the card to arrive in school.***

*Your child will be unable to make purchases from the canteen until their dinner account is credited (i.e. 3 days following your top-up in store) and will need to bring a packed lunch.*

*PayPoint payments can take up to 3 days before they reach the school and therefore your child's account has to be kept 'topped-up' in advance (£10 balance minimum) if you choose to use this method of payment. You can find your local stores by visiting the website <https://www.paypoint.com/en-gb/consumers/store-locator>*

*Cheques – Please note cheques should not be given as payment for lunch, as the catering is provided by an external company.*

**Q How can I check the credit on an account?**

**A** *Pupils can ask the catering staff at the till.*

*Parents can logon to their child's ParentPay account and view the dinner money balance.*

**Q When my child leaves the school can I transfer their balance to their siblings account?**

**A** *Yes - Email '[ColomaP.Pay@coloma.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:ColomaP.Pay@coloma.croydon.sch.uk)' who will pass your request on to the Catering Company. Please include the name and tutor group of the child leaving and their siblings name and tutor group.*

**Q How do I obtain a refund when my child leaves the school?**

**A** *Email '[ColomaP.Pay@coloma.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:ColomaP.Pay@coloma.croydon.sch.uk)' giving the school permission to pass your request for a refund on to the Catering Company. Please include the name and tutor group of the child leaving, the cheque payable 'name' and the postal address.*

**Q How do 'Free School Meal' (FSM) entitlements work?**

**A** *On a daily basis the Cashless Catering System will automatically credit the child's account with the current free school meal allowance of £2.30 – this money can only be used for Lunch purchases. Pupils with FSM entitlement will be anonymous at the till. Please note that any unspent monies cannot be carried over to the next day.*

*In additional to the current £2.30 FSM allowance, you can also credit your child's account with extra money which can be used at breakfast, break or also on top of the FSM allowance at lunchtime. This money remains on their account until used/spent.*

**Q Can anyone else use my child's biometric account?**

**A** *No – due to the extensive security on biometric templates, no-one else will be able to access your child's account. In addition the till user can see a photo of your child's face on the till.*