

Lancashire County Commercial Services

Dear Parent or Carer,

September 2015

Whether your child is returning to Alder Grange School after the summer break, or has started here for the first time in September, we thought it might help to have a few reminders about the workings of the cashless catering system that was originally introduced during the summer term of 2001.

In September 2010 we changed the system to one involving PIN numbers, rather than the old swipe cards. Many parents felt they had spent more on replacement cards than meals! Hopefully the new system has resolved that problem. Cashless catering means your child is issued with their own individual PIN number which is entered on a keypad whenever making purchases from the dining room at breaks as well as lunch times. This means that even pupils who bring packed lunches may need to use the PIN that has been issued.

New from Summer 2015 will be the ability to put credit onto your child's dinner money account by means of an online system. ParentPay is now being adopted by many Lancashire schools and allows parents to pay for a variety of things online – it can allow you to pay for several children in the same school or across different schools with one secure online transaction, at no cost to yourself. Pupils will still be able to put credit onto their meal accounts by using coins/notes in the revaluers sited in school, but cheques will no longer be accepted. Obviously for safety and security we would urge parents to use the online system wherever possible. Credit cannot be spent all at once, a daily limit is set sufficient for a lunch, together with purchases at breakfast or morning break.

Please note the school does not have the ability to split notes or coins – for that reason using the online payments system makes the most sense.

Free school meal pupils have a lunch allowance automatically credited daily to the system, so they are 'indistinguishable' from other customers, they can only spend this at lunchtime, but can add their own extra credit to spend at breakfast/break.

What if the PIN number is forgotten? The first thing to say is that any credit is not lost, they can be 'reminded' of their PIN by asking the catering supervisor or the welfare supervisor at lunchtime. **If the PIN is habitually forgotten your child runs the real risk of being made to wait until the end of lunch service each day.** Part of the benefit to be gained from the system is about teaching the pupils life skills. They will have to plan ahead, making sure that they tell you in good time when they need more credit, ensuring that they remember their PIN number and most importantly that they protect their PIN and **DO NOT** share their details with any other pupils.

If you have any queries over the operation of the cashless system, or any aspect of the catering services at Alder Grange School, please do not hesitate to contact the Catering Supervisor.

FEATURES OF THE CASHLESS SCHOOL

MEAL SYSTEM RELATING TO PARENTS

- * Convenience of paying for school meals in advance. No more searching for change every morning.
- * Discourages the misuse of school dinner money through spending in shops outside the school. You control where they eat.
- * Alleviates many of the problems often associated with the use of cash in schools. i.e.: Loss and theft.
- * Specific food allergies and ingredients can be barred automatically.
- * Healthy eating can be encouraged and rewarded.
- * Queuing times are reduced through increased speed of service.
- * Automatic free meal allocation with the pupil remaining anonymous.
- * Detailed reports to analyse all aspects of the use of the system. If you believe your child is not spending their allowance 'sensibly', then we can provide a printout on what they have bought!
- * Giving control of pupil accounts to pupils by using the Cashless System teaches them important life skills.
- * A more efficient delivery of service helps the caterer to provide wholesome, healthy and enjoyable school meals at a reasonable cost.