

Cashless catering – what you need to know

Cashless Catering is a card system for the school cafeteria. An electronic card is issued to each student and it is essential that this is looked after carefully and brought to school every day, whether or not the student is intending to eat in the cafeteria.

Will my child be able to pay cash for school meals in the cafeteria?

No. Only cashless cards are accepted for payment in the cafeteria.

If my child's account runs out of money, will he/she be able to purchase food?

The school will contact parents on the day should their child's account go into debt to enable parents to top up that evening. At the discretion of the school we may allow a small overdraft but we would urge parents to always keep catering accounts in credit. You are able to set up alerts on our online system to let you know when your child's account is getting low.

How will my child know how much money is left on the card?

The credit balance is displayed on the till when the child purchases food. If the balance is low the kitchen staff should remind your child of the need for a top-up. You can check your child's balance online at any time.

Will my child lose their money if they lose their card?

No. The balance of all accounts is held on the computer system. The card provides access to the individual student's account and a card must be produced to purchase food. New cards are available from the Finance Office at the cost of £1 (cash or from their cashless catering account balance if it has enough credit). Defaced/damaged cards will also be replaced at a cost of £1.

What prevents someone else from using my child's lost card?

The kitchen staff see a photograph of the child when the card is swiped.

How much money can I add to my child's account?

There is no maximum – most parents prefer to pay for meals for a week or more at a time. The best way to pay is online. Cheques and cash placed in the finance drop box in the reception area by 8:30 am will be credited to the account by first break. Cash must be in an envelope with the child's name, tutor group and the amount enclosed written on it. Cheques need not be in an envelope but must have the name and tutor group of the child written on the reverse. If you have more than one child here, it is not necessary to write a separate cheque for each, provided the breakdown is on the back. We are not able to give change for notes.

Who should I make cheques payable to?

HCC Court Moor School.

Does my child have to eat in the cafeteria every day?

No. Your child can eat as often or as infrequently as he/she likes. Any credit on the card account will be held on the account until spent. The only limits applied by the system are the daily spend limits.

How does the daily spending limit work?

The system will add up all purchases made on a particular day. If the total amount of the purchases exceeds the daily spend limit, payment will be refused. The system daily spend limit is set at £5.00 per day. Parents can change this limit upwards or downwards at any time by emailing adminoffice@court-moor.hants.sch.uk or by sending a note to the finance office if your child pays in cash.

Can I see how my child has spent the money?

Yes. Please register online in order to do this.

What are the advantages of the system to parents?

We encourage online payments, as it can sometimes be difficult to find the right change for lunches every day. Some parents are concerned that their children are not spending their lunch money on food but on sweets or other things outside of school. By paying online you can make sure the money goes onto their account and see what they are purchasing.

When will my child be issued with a card?

On his/her first day.

My child is entitled to free school meals. How does this work?

Please apply online as set out on the school's website. Your child's card will be credited with the free school meal amount each day. The FSM allowance is for students to buy a staple meal consisting of a hot main meal or sandwich, a choice of cake, biscuit or fruit and a drink. Some parents choose to supplement their cashless catering account which allows them to buy other items outside of and in addition to this range. If any part of the allowance remains unspent, it is not carried forward to the next day. If you have added extra money to his/her account this credit will carry forward.

With such short breaks, how can my child be sure he/she won't spend the whole time queueing?

One of the beauties of the cashless catering system is the fast processing through the tills.

Can the cashless catering account be used for any other purchases?

Stationery, shin pads and mouth guards can also be purchased using the card providing there is enough credit.

I hope this gives you all the information you need. If you have any further queries, please contact me.

Mrs Sarah Davis
Finance Officer
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