



# MARLING

## SIXTH FORM

*Downfield Road*

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MARLING SIXTH FORM  
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Dear Parents/Carers

### CASHLESS CATERING SYSTEM

Marling School have in place a 'cashless catering' system in the Dining Hall which means that students do not pay for food and drink using cash, payment will be automatically deducted from a pre-paid account. In the Sixth Form cafeteria, students will need to pay by card or cash.

The benefits for students are:

- Much shorter queues at break and lunchtime because the cafeteria staff will not have to deal with cash/change
- Not having to worry about forgotten/lost lunch money

The benefits for parents are:

- The student's account can be pre-loaded through an online payment system
- The problems of having cash available each day, or having to give your son or daughter a large denomination note when nothing smaller is available, will be removed
- You can monitor what your son or daughter is buying, discuss healthy options and set daily limits
- You can restrict what your son or daughter is buying for example by limiting the number of 'sweet treats' he can buy in a day/week
- If your son or daughter suffers from a food allergy it will not let him buy something that contains the allergen

The method we are hoping the majority of parents will wish to adopt is biometric, using a finger image. We will stress from the outset that if you feel strongly that you do not wish to take this route we will provide a 'PIN number' alternative.

Attached is an overview of the system, together with some FAQs about both this system specifically, and school data security. Please rest assured that safety and security are uppermost in our thinking and we would not have installed this system unless we were 100% confident in the safety and security of the data gathered and used.

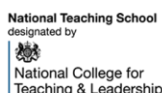
We hope that the FAQs on the following pages will answer any questions you have, but if you have any further questions after you have read the rest of this document, please email [finance@marling.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:finance@marling.gloucs.sch.uk). **Please find attached a reply slip which must be returned to Marling School on the first day of term, Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.**

Thank you

Dr Stuart Wilson  
Headteacher

*Marling Sixth Form Co-educational from 2019*

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## What Are Biometrics?

Biometric authentication is the automatic recognition of a living being using suitable body characteristics. There are many different biometric features that can be used for authentication purposes; these include finger image, signature, iris, retina, DNA or any other unique characteristic. The feature we use for Marling School's Dining Hall payments is a finger image.

Once a student's finger image has been taken and saved on to a database, each time the student's finger is scanned at the Dining Hall till it can be compared with information stored in the database. If the comparison matches, it confirms the identity of the student allowing them to make payments for food and drinks automatically from a pre-paid account.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why use biometrics instead of other existing identification methods?

- With a biometric system, students cannot borrow or steal credentials from each other
- Queues are reduced, because the rate of identification of students is quickened
- Students need no longer carry cards, remember PIN numbers, or use cash to buy a meal
- Biometric systems save time and money for both school and students because the need to replace lost cards and forgotten passwords is eliminated

### 2. Does the system record images of individual fingerprints?

The system requires each pupil to register only once, usually by placing a finger on a scanner, although other identification methods are available. No images of fingerprints are stored on the system, and never will be. Only mathematical representations of certain points of a finger image are recorded, typically between ten and sixty depending on the characteristics of the finger. When a finger is placed onto a scanner, the image is converted using a one way algorithm to turn the scanned image into a string of numbers.

This string of numbers is encrypted and stored in the database; the data is extremely secure in its encrypted form - even if it were not encrypted it would be impossible to recreate the original scanned image from the stored data.

### 3. Where will the data be stored and how secure is it?

The data gathered will be held in a database on a server located at Marling School, the data will not be available to anyone outside of Marling School.

The database is encrypted using AES256 – an industry standard and highly secure technology. Marling School will have its own secret unique group of AES256 encryption keys, which means that the database and any backup of its contents can only be accessed on our licensed hardware, and the encrypted data is only available to us, the registered licensee.

Even if our security were to be compromised and a backup of the database stolen, the encrypted data would still be unreadable, even by another school.

### 4. What is the alternative for students whose parents do not wish to take part in the biometric system, or are unable to provide biometric data?

Whilst we hope that the majority of students will use the biometric system, the school can issue any student who wishes to opt out of, or is unable to use the biometric system, with a PIN number.

## **5. What would happen if I forgot to pre-load the account and my son or daughter needed lunch?**

Just as currently students can borrow money from school if they forget to bring some in, we will continue to ensure that no-one goes hungry!

## **6. I would prefer to send my son or daughter in with lunch money each day rather than putting a lump sum into an account in advance – can I still do that?**

Yes, there will be a machine in school that your son or daughter can put cash into each day if you wish him to, and it will register to his account – a bit like paying at the self-service till in a supermarket.

## **7. How will the system work on a practical level?**

As a student picks up food and goes to the till, they will use a biometric reader and the staff operating the till will register what they are buying. If any of the items have been restricted by parents, e.g. foods containing allergens then the member of staff will let the student know.

An added bonus is that a biometric reader in the Dining Hall will allow students to see the balance on their account at any time.