Biometric Recognition System Information

The school wishes to use information about your child as part of an automated (i.e. electronically-operated) recognition system. The information from your child that we wish to use is referred to as 'biometric information' (see next paragraph). Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (sections 26 to 28), we are required to notify each parent of a child and obtain the written consent of at least one parent before being able to use a child's biometric information for an automated system.

Biometric information and how it will be used

Biometric information is information about a person's physical or behavioural characteristics that can be used to identify them, for example, information from their fingerprint. The school would like to take and use information from your child's fingerprint and use this information for the purpose of paying for food in the dining room.

The information will be used as part of an automated biometric recognition system. This system will take measurements of your child's fingerprint and convert these measurements into a template to be stored on the system. **An image of your child's fingerprint is not stored**. The template (i.e. measurements taking from your child's fingerprint) is what will be used to permit your child to access services.

You should note that the law places specific requirements on schools when using personal information, such as biometric information, about pupils for the purposes of an automated biometric recognition system.

For example:

a) the school cannot use the information for any purpose other than those for which it was originally obtained and made known to the parent(s) (i.e. as stated above);
b) the school must ensure that the information is stored securely;
c) the school must tell you what it intends to do with the information;
d) unless the law allows it, the school cannot disclose personal information to another person/body.

Providing your consent/objecting

As stated above, in order to be able to use your child's biometric information, 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, if your child objects to this, the school cannot collect or use his/her biometric information for inclusion on the automated recognition system.

You can also object to the proposed processing of your child's biometric information at a later stage or withdraw any consent you have previously given. This means that, if you give consent but later change your mind, you can withdraw this consent. Please note that any consent, withdrawal of consent or objection from a parent must be in writing.

Even if you have consented, your child can object or refuse at any time to their biometric information being taken/used. Their objection does not need to be in writing. We would appreciate it if you could discuss this with your child and explain to them that they can object to this if they wish.

If you do not wish your child's biometric information to be processed by the school, or your child objects to such processing, the law says that we must provide reasonable alternative arrangements for children who are not going to use the automated system to pay for food in the dining room. Those students who do not use the biometric system for purchasing food from the dining room will be issued with a 4 digit pass code which they will need to both remember and keep secure. They will use this code when paying for food from the dining room.

Please note that when your child leaves the school, or if for some other reason he/she ceases to use the biometric system, his/her biometric data will be securely deleted.

Biometric Fingertip Recognition Explained
Every fingerprint is unique and, as can be seen from Diagram (a), each one contains a vast amount of detail.

For a system, such as Live Register, to capture every detail of every individuals fingerprint, not only would a huge amount of storage be needed but incredibly powerful and expensive processing power would be needed. By 'boiling down' the detail in the fingerprint to a much smaller number of unique characteristics the processing and storage requirements are hugely reduced, resulting in a fast, accurate and cost effective solution. There are essentially two processes involved: Enrolment and Identification.

Enrolment
A finger is placed on the reader and the system extracts the co-ordinates of a collection of features.

Minutia – (b)
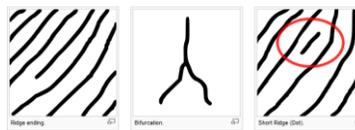
These features are referred to as minutia; they are points where ridges split in two, end abruptly or are particularly short, as shown in Diagram (b). Typically 25 to 35 minutiae will be detected.

The resulting map of these minutiae (c) is converted into a vector of numbers, referred to as the biometric template. The biometric template (not an image of the original fingerprint) is then stored in the Live Register database. This is an encrypted number, only useful within the system and cannot be used to recreate an individual's fingerprint image, either by Live Register or by any external system. Once all students have been enrolled Live Register has a biometric template related to each student's fingertip, which can then be used for identification.

Identification
The student places their finger on the scanner and the system searches its database for a biometric template which matches the detected minutia map of the fingertip being scanned. The position of the finger on the scanner, the pressure applied and many other physical factors mean that it's highly unlikely that a perfect match will be found; so long as the comparison falls within previously set thresholds the match can be considered to be acceptable.

Live Register's Biometric Solution
The algorithms used in generating the biometric template, how the templates are efficiently stored, catalogued and retrieved, how newly scanned fingertips are matched with those in the database and how the data is encrypted are all critical in making biometric detection work well. Live Register has deep experience in the technologies and techniques needed to make fingertip detection successful, its solution is already in widespread use throughout UK education and we can confidently state that the Live Register biometric solution is fast accurate and safe.

CASHLESS CATERING AND ONLINE PAYMENTS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will my child's actual fingerprint be stored?

No, An image of your child's fingerprint is not stored. Key information is taken from the image and converted. Please see information sheet from Live Register which fully explains how this is done.

Can the school share the biometric information with other parties?

Unless the law allows it, the school cannot disclose personal information to another person/body.

When will my child's biometric information be taken?

This will happen on a registration day in early March.

What happens to the biometric information when my child leaves the school?

Please note that when your child leaves the school, or if for some other reason he/she ceases to use the biometric system, his/her biometric data will be securely deleted.

When will this system start?

On 1st April 2015.

What happens if I give consent now but wish to withdraw my consent at a later date?

You can also object to the proposed processing of your child's biometric information at a later stage or withdraw any consent you have previously given. This means that, if you give consent but later change your mind, you can withdraw this consent. Please note that any consent, withdrawal of consent or objection from a parent must be in writing.

Will both parents views be taken into account?

In order to be able to use your child's biometric information, 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. The school will write to all parents where their details are held on the school database.

What if I give my consent but my child does not give consent?

If your child objects to this, the school cannot collect or use his/her biometric information for inclusion on the automated recognition system even if you have given consent.

If I do not give my consent, how will my child pay for food?

You child will be issued with a 4 digit code which they will use to both load cash onto their account via the cash loader and to pay for items from the canteen. However please consider that the use of fingerpint recognition is much easier as the child will not have to remember a code, they will always have their fingerprint with them.

Is this system going to be used for other purposes in the school (such as registration)?

We do not have any current plans to use this technology within other areas of the school. However, should we wish to in future, we will inform all parents in advance.

How will I pay online?

You will be able to log onto an online payments system and securely access your child's account to not only load credit onto your childs catering account but also pay for trips and other items. Information and instructions on how to use this will be issued nearer the time.

Can I see how much my child has spent in the canteen?

One advantage of using the online payments is that you will be able to see how much your child is spending in the canteen and what they are eating.

Can I credit their account at any time?

Yes, once the payment system is ready we will send instruction out on how to activate your account and upload credit ready for the 1st of April and thereafter.

What if I cannot access online payments?

We will be installing one cash loader for those who still need to send cash into school with their child.

Will there be busy queues at the cash loader?

It is likely that this will be busy at key times – Monday mornings and lunchtimes, start of term, the first few days after going live. WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO CREDIT YOUR CHILD'S ACCOUNT VIA THE ONLINE SYSTEM TO AVOID THIS.

Can the cash loader be used to pay for trips, music lessons, revision guides etc?

No. It is purely for credit onto your child's catering account. Payments for trips etc can be made via the online system or in the usual way in cash at the Finance Office

If my child is in receipt of free school meals how will they get their lunch?

Their account will automatically be credited each day with the free school meal allowance. They will obtain their food and give their fingerprint in the same way as all other pupils. This ensures that no child can be identified as being free school meals by other students, only the cashier will know.

If my child is in receipt of free school meals; will they still be able to load extra money onto their account?

You can credit additional monies to your child's account for use for snacks in the same way as everyone else.