6 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Facial Recognition for Contactless Payments in School

In order to improve service in our canteen we are moving to Facial Recognition for payments. This will greatly improve the speed of service and remove the need for fobs, which can be lost or left at home. We believe this move will be very popular with students, many of whom are already used to unlocking their phones with facial recognition technology.

Facial recognition technology is a safe and secure contactless biometric method that enhances the speed of service and retains the security of fingerprints whilst eliminating the requirement to physically touch a scanner, making school meal purchases completely contactless.

Please see more information on Facial Recognition below.

If you consent to your daughter/son using biometric recognition systems within the school, please login to WisePay, go to 'Shop', 'School Merchandise' and select 'Facial Recognition Consent'. Please ensure you check out the order to register your consent and ensure that your daughter/son can take advantage of this improved system.

If you do not consent to your daughter/son using our biometric systems, you do not need to take any action and alternative arrangements will be made for them to pay for food in school.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Viner
Business Manager

Biometric recognition is coming to Newstead Wood School!

To improve speed and efficiency in our food serving areas, we are introducing Facial Recognition for payments.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you using biometric recognition?

Biometric recognition converts physical characteristics into a unique digital signature that can quickly and securely locate your child's cashless catering account. This helps speed up service and eliminates the requirement to carry cash or an alternative access method, such as a card that can be lost or stolen.

How does it work?

When the student looks at the camera, the software reads key features (unique distance between facial features for facial recognition) and compares this against the database of registered users. When it finds a match, it automatically opens their cashless catering account allowing the operator to complete the sale of their school meals.

How is the data stored?

Facial Recognition data is a unique string of characters known as a faceprint template. This data is encrypted using AES 256 and stored on a school server within the secure school network or hosted on a secure Azure server. We store a photo along with the faceprint template. The cashless system has always stored a user's photo, which is used as an added verification by the canteen staff.

Can any other agency use these biometrics registrations?

No, the software turns your child's physical characteristics into an encrypted (using AES 256) string of characters known as a template. Even if someone gained access to the data and broke the encryption, this template does not contain enough information to reverse engineer it into a usable photo.

What happens when my child leaves the school?

When a student leaves school, all data can be deleted very easily.

I don't wish to permit my child to participate in biometric recognition. Can my child still purchase school meals?

Yes, an alternative method of authentication will be available.

What if I change my mind?

If you initially opt-in for your child to use biometric recognition but later change your mind, contact the school, and we will remove the permission from the system, automatically removing any biometric data associated with your child and providing your child with an alternative authentication method.