

# OAKMEEDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE



CTR/ESD

14<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Dear Parent

## Cashless Catering will Go Live on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011

This letter is to bring you up to date with the introduction of Cashless Catering at Oakmeeds. The new system will be introduced on 28<sup>th</sup> February immediately after half term. It has many advantages both to students and the College. It will mean that students no longer need to bring cash into College and it will make management of the Café and finance much more efficient. Before the system is introduced all students will be fully informed about the system and how to use it.

### Making payments

Each child will have a personal account on our finance computer system. Parents will pay money into that account to cover the cost of their child's food and drink purchased from the Cafe. There will be 3 ways in which payments can be made

1. Online payments via the Oakmeeds website [www.oakmeeds.w-sussex.sch.uk](http://www.oakmeeds.w-sussex.sch.uk)  
There will be a link on the website to take you direct to the system. Using this form of payment is similar to buying things on line.
2. By cheque (made payable to Oakmeeds Community College) to the Finance Office by 9.30a.m. on Monday's. Please mark envelope clearly with child's name, tutor group and 'lunch money'.
3. By cash to the Finance Office on a weekly, monthly or half termly basis - to be received on Monday morning by 9.30 a.m. Please mark envelope clearly with child's name, tutor group and 'Lunch Money'.

You may pay or "load" the account with whatever amount you deem suitable. There are no hard and fast rules. Some parents will want to pay weekly, others monthly or half termly. This must be done in advance of your child using the system. In order to ensure that a student doesn't spend all their account in one day, we will programme an upper spend limit per day of £5.00. If you wish to change this limit we will be happy to do so if you let us know in writing.

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WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL  
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To ease the introduction of the new system, payments may be made into your child's account online or by cheque from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011.

From 28<sup>th</sup> February **No cash will be accepted at the till points.**

**Using the system**

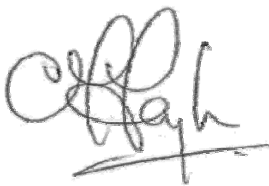
The system we have chosen to use is one called a "biometric" system. It requires a scan of the users thumb to be taken in advance and then this is turned into a sequence of numbers. It is this sequence of numbers and not a picture or fingerprint that is stored on the system. When your child wishes to use the café they press their thumb on a pad to confirm payment. In order to enable the system to work accurately certain other information will need to be kept on your child's account e.g. child's name, class, photo, account balance and, if appropriate, any free meal entitlement. This data will be handled under the guidelines of the Data Protection Act and only used by parties directly associated with the College. Access to the information is controlled strictly by the College.

It is therefore essential that the attached permission slip is returned by **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011 in order that you can be registered with the system and hence access Café Oakmeeds in the future.**

**Frequently asked questions**

Please find attached a note where we have tried to address many of the anticipated most frequently asked questions. In addition we would like to invite you to an evening event on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 7.00pm in the Drama Studio** where we will be explaining how the system works and taking any questions.

Yours sincerely,



C. J. Taylor  
Headteacher

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Please complete and return to the finance office in B Block by **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2011**

**I give permission for: ..... Tutor Group: .....**

**To attend Biometric registration.**

**Signed.....**

**Print Name.....**

**Date.....**

## Some Questions and Answers

**Q. Why is Cafe Oakmeeds going 'Cashless'?**

**A. Benefits the cashless system will bring to the school.**

- Specific food allergy ingredients can be barred automatically.
- Healthy eating is encouraged. (A reward points system will be introduced at a later date).
- Discourages the misuse of school dinner money through spending in shops outside of the College grounds.
- Alleviates many of the associated problems with the use of cash in schools. i.e.: Loss, theft and bullying.
- Queuing times are reduced through increased speed of service.
- Automatic free meal allocation with the student remaining anonymous.
- Having control of student accounts by students- teaching them important life skills.
- A more efficient delivery of service helps the Café to provide wholesome, healthy and enjoyable school meals.

**Q. How do I credit the account?**

**A. This can be done in 3 ways:**

- **By the Internet**

By use of the online payment system

(Please go to [www.oakmeeds.w-sussex.sch.uk](http://www.oakmeeds.w-sussex.sch.uk) for full details)

A login and password will be provided when your child is biometrically registered. This will allow you to make electronic payments into your child's account. (Please note online payments can also be used to pay for school trips. Separate accounts will be created for each trip so there will be no confusion with the lunch system).

- **By Cheque**, this eliminates the need for students to carry any cash. Cheques should be made payable to 'Oakmeeds Community College' with the student's name and tutor group on the back. Place in the post box outside the Finance Office. By 9.30 a.m. on Mondays.
- **By Cash**, Weekly, Monthly or Half Termly.

**There is no minimum or maximum amount that has to be credited to the account before it can be used. (However the account must be in credit to purchase food)**

**Q. Will students have problems in using this system?**

**A.** Some students may find it difficult to control their accounts for the first couple of weeks, but because of a daily spend limit, most learn this important life skill very quickly and will enjoy being in control of their account and the reduced queuing time.

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- Q. Will we be able to have any information on how the system is being used?**
- A. Reports can be obtained from the system giving comprehensive information on all aspects of use for each individual student as well as each day's service. These reports can be for a specific day or between any dates you wish, they will be dated and timed to the minute, and can be obtained from the Catering Department. Please contact the Café Manager, Sue Everest for details.
- a) To show every item of food served and the total cost of each serving.
- b) Individual payments made direct to the school by cheque or cash and via the online system.
- c) A total overview to show the date, time and cost of each purchase, and the value of all cash balances.
- Q. Can I still continue to pay by cheque?**
- A. Cheques are encouraged because it means no cash has to be carried. Cheques should be made payable to 'Oakmeeds Community College.' Paying by cheque means you know the money is being spent on healthy food and drink within the College.
- Q. How do I check if I have credit on my account?**
- A. You can login to your child's account via the website or your child can see their balance at the till point.
- Q. I am entitled to a free meal, how does it work?**
- A. The allowance is credited to your child at lunch time each day to allow them to purchase their meal. The Current value is £2.00 (**This allowance if not used, will not carry over to the next day**). If your child spends more than the daily free meal allowance, the balance will come from their own account.
- N.B If you think your child may be entitled to a free school meal, and you haven't already applied, please obtain a form from the College Reception.**
- Q. What if my photograph/biometric registration has not been taken?**
- A. New students will have their photograph and biometric scan taken within the first weeks of term.
- Q. What happens if I forget my money to credit my account?**
- A. You will need to go to the Finance Office for them to authorise and cover the cost of a meal – this **MUST** be paid back in full the next day.
- Q. How will 'healthy eating' be encouraged?**
- A. After the new system has been operating for a while, we hope to enhance the College's Healthy Eating Policy. When the food is selected on the Café server's keypad, it will also register points for a balanced, healthy and nutritious school dinner. There will be some recognition for the highest scoring students.

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**Q. What is meant by 'dietary control'?**

**A.** Should the student have a specific food allergy, or be a diagnosed diabetic, this medical information can be coded into the system, preventing foods with allergy ingredients from being served to a particular student, by automatically locking out relevant buttons on the keyboard.

**Q. Can I have any say in what my child eats?**

**A.** The system has a blocking facility that will identify any items the child is not allowed either by choice or dietary needs. This needs to be confirmed in writing by the parent/guardian.

We thank you in advance for your support in this exciting new development at Café Oakmeeds.

If you require any further information please contact:

Sue Everest  
Catering Manager (01444)257469

or

Janet Saunders  
Finance Manager (01444) 251686

