



**Sunrising, East Looe, Cornwall PL13 1NQ**

**Telephone: 01503 262625**

Email: [enquiries@looea.net](mailto:enquiries@looea.net)

[www.looe.cornwall.sch.uk](http://www.looe.cornwall.sch.uk)

Headteacher: Mr P Boyes BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH

Our Ref: PBS/LSU

September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Online Payments and Cashless Catering**

#### **ParentPay**

We are pleased to advise that the Academy operates an online payments and monitoring system called ParentPay.

ParentPay is a free service that provides you with many benefits:

- you can pay by credit card, debit card or PayPoint for school meals, trips, visits and educational resources purchased from the Academy (there are no transaction fees)
- it links directly to our cashless catering system to provide you with the opportunity to monitor your child's meal purchases
- you can check balances for school trips or catering

You will be provided with username and password to access ParentPay, please see more at

[www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com)

#### **Cashless Catering**

Our cashless till system, provided by market leader Sharps, incorporates the latest technology, encryption and security features and eliminates the need for students to carry cash throughout the day, so they won't forget or lose their dinner money, or spend it on other things. Those students entitled to free school meals will be automatically credited by the Academy.

The money spent on food and drink will be deducted on a daily basis and the system is programmed to limit the daily spend to £4.00. This can be increased or decreased by parents/carers via the online admission form. If you would like to change it at any time in the future, please do so by emailing [finance@looea.net](mailto:finance@looea.net) or by telephoning the Academy.

Once the money is in their account, students will pay for their purchases using either a cashless card, which will be provided by the Academy (replacements can be purchased on Parent Pay) or by placing their finger on a payment scanner. This method uses biometric finger image data where the system will recognise an electronic pattern generated by the unique features on a person's thumb or finger each time they use the

payment scanner - it does not record or store the actual fingerprint. All information obtained for cashless payments remains within the Academy and is subject to data protection legislation and will be used in accordance with our privacy policy.

We operate an 'opt in' policy for the biometric finger image option and therefore kindly ask that you give consent via the online admission form. If you choose not to have your child registered for the biometric option, a cashless card will be allocated to access the till system; it will be your child's responsibility to remember the card and to keep it secure at all times.

The key features of the cashless catering system are explained below in the 'frequently asked questions'.

Yours faithfully

Mr P Boyes  
Headteacher

## Cashless Catering System - Frequently Asked Questions -

**Q Why has the Academy moved to a biometric cashless payments system?**

**A** The Student Council had, for many years, previously asked that action be taken to reduce the queues at break and lunch times. Biometrically authorised transactions are the quickest means of paying for food and drink, helping students spend much less time queuing and more time eating, socialising or attending homework and other lunchtime clubs. Additionally, students on free school meals will now undertake the same transactions as all other students when they pay for their purchases. Furthermore, parents and carers will be empowered by the ability to analyse their child's food and drink purchases.

**Q What is a cashless catering system?**

**A** The Trust-e cashless solution provided by Sharp is a purpose-designed system that removes cash at the point of sale to provide students with a faster, more efficient and more appealing school meal service.

**Q What is biometric?**

**A** Biometric is simply a method of identifying an individual person from their unique, natural features.

**Q How does the biometric system work?**

**A** An algorithm is generated from the image created by a finger or thumb scan, selecting between 50 and 130 points to form a unique pattern for that person. The system does not use fingerprints and therefore does not store any fingerprints. The pattern it creates is of use only in our cashless system.

**Q How is biometric data stored and used?**

**A** The information of a person who has been biometrically registered is stored on a secure Biometric Controller within the Academy, which only our provider, Sharp, can access. Once an account is credited the person places their finger/thumb on the payment terminal scanner, which looks up their account details and allows them to purchase items using this unique method of identification.

**Q How does my child register on the biometric system?**

**A** Registration will take place at the Academy, either before or on the day of joining. Your child will attend a registration terminal where they will be required to place their finger/thumb on a biometric sensor twice to obtain a matching template, which only takes a few seconds.

**Q What if I do not opt in to the biometric system?**

**A** If you have chosen to not opt in to biometric, your child will still be registered for cashless payments, but will be presented with a cashless card instead of using finger image recognition. This takes a bit longer for each transaction and the PIN must be kept secure by your child.

**Q What methods of payment can be used to credit a cashless account?**

**A** Any amount can be credited to an account as frequently as you wish by way of any of the following methods. Once an account has been credited the monies cannot be withdrawn and must be spent on the school meal services:

**a. On-line payments**

We have introduced on-line payments via ParentPay, the industry leader. A temporary user name and password will be issued to create your account. You can pay 24/7 by debit or credit card, with no transaction fees. If you need help accessing ParentPay, please email [financeteam@loeca.net](mailto:financeteam@loeca.net)

**b. PayPoint**

You will be issued with a PayPoint card, which can be used to top up your child's account at your local PayPoint stores (there are 3 in Looe and 2 in Pelynt). Payments via PayPoint will take up to 48 hours to be credited. You can find your local stores at <http://www.paypoint.co.uk>

**c. Cash**

A dedicated paying-in machine is sited in the Canteen to top up a student's account using the finger/thumb sensor or by placing their cashless card on the scanner. The following tender is accepted:

Notes -£20, £10, £5

Coins - £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p (please note – copper coins are not accepted)

**Q How can I check the credit on an account?**

**A** Students - This can be done at the paying-in machine by the account holder placing their finger/thumb on the sensor or by placing their cashless card on the scanner. The current balance will then be displayed.

Parents/Carers - This can be accessed online via a ParentPay account. You can have a ParentPay account to view purchases and balances, even if you do not wish to make online payments.

**Q Can I change the daily spend limit?**

**A** Yes. The daily spend limit has a default of £4.00, but this may be changed by written or telephone request to the Academy by parents/carers; we do not adjust the limit at the request of students.

**Q What happens if my child's account is not in credit?**

**A** You can set up an automated system message on ParentPay when the account balance gets low to help to keep the account in credit. You can add funds online at any time. We will contact you by phone if your child finds that they require additional funds.

**Q How do free school meal entitlements work?**

**A** All free school meal entitlements will be entered on to the system following confirmation of entitlement. The system will, on a daily basis, automatically allocate the appropriate accounts with the free school meal allowance of £2.75. Entitled students remain anonymous at all times as all student transactions are processed in the exact same manner at the tills. Any monies not spent from the daily free school meal allocation will not be carried over to the next day.

**Q Can anyone else use my child's account?**

**A** This is extremely unlikely. Due to the extensive security on biometric templates nobody will be able to access your child's account using their finger or thumb. As a secondary precaution, a photo image is allocated to each pupil's account. If your child is using a cashless card, which someone obtains and attempts to use, the photograph shown on the payment terminal at the time of the transaction will not match and should alert the operator to a suspected fraudulent sale taking place.

**Q My child has an allergy, how will this be monitored?**

**A** All allergy records registered with the Academy will be automatically entered on to the cashless database. When students attempt to purchase an item that has ingredients that they are allergic to, the system will alert the operator and prevent them from selling the chosen item. Please make sure the Academy is kept up to date on allergy and other conditions.

**Q Can I request a printed report of my child's meal intake?**

**A** Yes. In addition to looking online via ParentPay, the cashless catering system provides for advanced reporting facilities, which includes dietary habits. These may be requested by contacting the Academy in writing.

**Q What are the technical specifications of the biometric information?**

**A** The individual templates are encrypted using a 256 bit AES key that is built into the scanner's hardware. Also, the persisted file is encrypted using a different 256 bit AES key built into the matching algorithm supplied by Secugen and generated by a unique license purchased for each site. This is more secure than the ANSI and ISO standards that government departments use as the Secugen Template is encrypted and the ANSI and ISO standards are not.

Outside of the cashless system the template data is useless and cannot be interpreted back into a usable fingerprint image. If this was not the case then there would be no world standards and performance measures for such technologies. The data is stored in an array in the RAM of the Biometric Controller and is also permanently stored on the hard drive of the Biometric Controller to be restored in the event of a reboot. Below is an example of a template code for an individual finger.

```
0X417741414142514141414445415141414151415341414D415A41414141414174774541414C7  
14777346C5869656D6C574945494A764A6B42466D6837616C4E764D704F517874517A706A4A395  
A31784935686C4177395366726E777645576357386C4573314B426F47443166694170675559704C  
763168423642682A7043
```

The solution is secure because the matching can only be done by the individual's consent as the finger has to be presented to the device for matching. We do not hold images of fingerprints in our system. The technology provided for this method of identification meets with BECTA guidelines and also allows students the option to opt out of the scheme and use a PIN number instead.

Also under data protection legislation, the Academy or caterer (the originator of the data) cannot allow access to this data by anyone for any other means than for the purpose the data was collected and that is to identify an individual within the solution we supply. Any biometric data that belongs to an individual that leaves the Academy is purged, which also is in line with the BECTA guidelines.

**Q Can we have information on data protection from Sharp UK Systems?**

**A** Sharp UK is accredited with ISO 27001 - Information Security Management System - and is committed to ensuring that privacy is protected. Should we ask you to provide certain information by which you can be identified, you can be assured that it will only be used in accordance with this privacy statement.

Sharp UK is registered as a data processor under data protection legislation and operate at all times under the data protection legislation guidelines.

The Academy's data will remain their responsibility and they remain fully in control of accessing, managing and updating all student data within the system. The Academy is operating as Data Controller under data protection legislation. All Sharp UK staff that may have administrator access to Academy data for support purposes are Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked.

Information collected to implement a cashless catering system is outlined below:

| Essential information collected |               | Optional information that may be requested |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Admissions Number               | Gender        | Unique Pupil Number                        |
| Surname                         | Date of Birth | Ethnicity                                  |
| Forename                        | Year          |  |
| Tutor Group                     | FSM Allowance |  |
| Current photograph              | Allergies     |  |

Sharp UK does not sell, distribute or lease your personal information to third parties.

Sharp UK removes all data from servers one week after the cashless system has gone live within the Academy.