



September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

FACIAL RECOGNITION IS COMING TO MINSTHORPE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

We're excited to announce that Facial Recognition will soon arrive at Minsthorpe Community College to offer a fast and straightforward payment experience for college meals.

It's important to us that everyone in our college community, including parents, carers, and students, is well-informed about this new development and has all the information needed before opting to use this new service.

This document contains detailed information about Facial Recognition, how it works, how we will use the software, and most importantly, the benefits for students.

Why Minsthorpe Community College Is Introducing Facial Recognition

Facial Recognition offers a quick and secure way for students to purchase college meal items without needing cash and the risk of losing cards or forgetting passwords. With Facial Recognition, students simply select their meal, look at the camera and go, speeding up the lunchtime service with a contactless point-of-sale experience.

This technology will be used as an additional authentication method at the checkout counters, providing faster service for students. Our goal is to help students reclaim time to enjoy their meal breaks and nutritious meals.

How The Technology Works

With Facial Recognition technology, students simply choose their meal, look at the checkout camera, and proceed with a quick and secure point-of-sale experience.

Facial Recognition is a biometric recognition method that works in the same way as other recognition technologies. Like a PIN, a unique identifier is attributed to each student and matched at the till for quick and secure access to their cashless account.

An image of the face is captured, and the software turns unique features of the face geometry, such as the distance between the eyes and the distance from the top of the forehead to the chin, to create a unique identifier for each student.

When students pay for their meal items at the point of sale, the camera matches their unique identifier to their cashless account to take payment.

How The Transaction Process Works:

1. Consent

Students must opt-in to use Facial Recognition before an image is taken. If students do not consent to using the software, the till operator cannot activate the Facial Recognition process.

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Principals Mark Gilmore & Rachael Merritt

**2. Capture**

The biometric system captures an image of the students' face. This image is not retained, stored, or distributed to third parties, and Facial Recognition cameras are only located at the point of sale for college meal transactions.

3. Collection

The system reads distinctive features from the image and processes it through an algorithm. This process turns the image into a unique string of characters, which serves as the student's unique identifier. This unique identifier is stored on a secure, encrypted database within the college and is used to verify students' accounts at the checkout.

4. Identification

During checkout, the cashier initiates the system to verify their account and process the transaction. The cashier must activate this process; the system is not live for students. A picture of the student is captured and processed through the algorithm to confirm their unique identifier and access their account. The image is not kept on record; only their unique identifier is stored.

Security of Facial Recognition

Biometrics, in this case, provides a unique identifier for the person present at the checkout. The unique identifier is created by processing the biometric capture through a mathematical algorithm, generating a unique number. Only this number is stored; the captured image is not retained. This data is encrypted using AES 256 (similar to encryption used by your online banking) and cannot be reversed to produce an image of the biometric, ensuring the highest level of security and compliance. Please refer to the College Biometrics Policy for further information.

How Do I Get Started?

Like all biometric recognition methods, Facial Recognition requires consent. If you would like to use this software to allow your child to purchase college meals, please complete the consent form follow the link or scan the QR code <https://forms.office.com/e/u7zdD0j0xt>



By the 17th October 2025.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Gilmore
Principal

Mrs R.A. Merritt
Principal

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FAQs

What are biometrics?

Biometrics authenticates people based on their unique characteristics and identifies possible matches to ensure accurate and secure identification. Facial Recognition is a type of biometric that we use in various aspects of life, including:

- **Security:** unlocking phones, accessing secure buildings, and logging into accounts
- **Identification:** faster check-ins at airports and hospitals
- **Convenience:** logging into computers and making payments for school meals

What student data is stored and where?

Biometric recognition operates on a closed-loop system, which means student data is stored on our secure database.

Can any other agency or 3rd party use the facial images?

No, the information is never shared, and the face template representing the students' faces is meaningless to anyone else. The software turns your child's image into a mathematical algorithm, and the stored information cannot be used to recreate the face image.

What happens when my child leaves the college?

All biometric data can be deleted; the college is the data controller and can delete the data from its databases. You can opt-out anytime, meaning the college will delete the biometric data.

What if I object to my child using Facial Recognition? Can my child still purchase school meals?

Parents and students reserve the right to object to using Facial Recognition. Any student not wishing to opt-in will be issued an alternative identification method, e.g., smartcards or PIN.

Is this technology 'live'?

No; catering staff must activate the process at the point of sale for students that have consented to use Facial Recognition. The system is not live; the cameras only capture students' images for the transaction process when the cashier activates the software.

Is the cashless system changing?

No; parents will still be able to top up their child's balance online using **SchoolGateway**.

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