

## Cashless Catering

As you may already be aware Oban High will be changing the way it provides catering for pupils.

Instead of handing over cash, each pupil will use a personal card which identifies his/her Cashless Catering account.

Pupils who carry a Young Scot Cards will be able to use these; Cashless Catering only cards will be issued to those who opt out of Young Scot; both types of cards will operate in the same way for the purpose of cashless catering.

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The card will have to be credited with money prior to use. To enable pupils to do this there are “top up” units conveniently placed within the secondary school where pupils can deposit cash to charge their card.

The “top up” machines accept £2, £1, 50p, 20p and 10p coins.

Parents can also make bigger payments, perhaps to cover a week at a time, by cheque directly to the school, with cheques made payable to “Argyll & Bute Council”.

Kitchen staff will swipe a pupil’s card through terminals in the dining area to record automatically, all the purchases made by the pupils. This process will debit the cost of the transaction from the balance remaining on the account.

The card offers significant advantages over traditional cash payment. Some of these are:

1. Use of a payment card cuts out the need for children to carry cash on a regular basis.
2. Pupils entitled to free meals use the cards in the same way as everyone else. Any stigma, which youngsters may feel about free meals, is completely removed.
3. The cards will speed up service in the canteen, so pupils will get their meals faster and have more time to eat them.
4. Pupils are responsible for their own “canteen debit card” and balance, encouraging self-discipline.
5. Restrictions can be set to prevent your child from buying particular food – very important in cases of allergies or other dietary conditions, or even just to encourage healthier eating.
6. Pupils may be able to earn rewards by accumulating points allocated to healthy food options.

7. If pupils carry cash less often, theft and bullying can be eliminated.
8. Cards carry a photograph of the pupil, thus providing an effective safeguard against misuse or fraud. A maximum daily spend limit can also be set up for each card ensuring that, in the unlikely event a card is used fraudulently, the loss will be limited to the daily maximum.

Since the monetary value attached to the card is held on a central computer and not on the card itself, once a lost or stolen card has been reported to the school it can be disabled, making it unusable for further purchases.

In the longer term, the Council proposes to make it easy for parents to credit money to their children's cards by providing facilities at local rent offices or supermarkets.

More detailed information on when these will become available and on how to use them will be sent out in due course.

Eventually it will also be possible for parents to manage payment over the internet or by more traditional direct debit or standing order types of arrangement. These facilities are not available at the moment.

If a card is lost or broken, a temporary card will be issued by the school.

If you do not wish your child to be issued with a cashless catering card, please contact the school.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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For more information on Young Scot why not check out the website [www.youngscot.org](http://www.youngscot.org)