

Biometrics are coming to Thomas Gainsborough School

We're excited to announce that Biometric scanning recognition will soon arrive at Thomas Gainsborough School to offer a fast and straightforward payment experience for school meals.

It's important to us that everyone in our school community, including parents, guardians, and students, are 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 Biometric recognition, how it works, how we will use the software, and most importantly, the benefits for students.

Why Thomas Gainsborough is introducing biometrics

The school continuously strives to improve student's authorisation and school transaction experience. Students with consent to use fingerprint biometrics can eliminate the need to remember passwords or carry physical identification cards and benefit from a simple and safe authentication process.

Fingerprint biometrics works in the same way as other recognition technology, like those used to unlock a phone. Like a PIN, a unique identifier is attributed to each student and matched for a quick and secure authorisation process.

How it works

- **Consent:** Students must opt-in to use Biometric recognition before a fingerprint scan is taken. The biometric fingerprint scanner captures the unique trait (e.g., it takes an impression of the fingerprint). This fingerprint impression is not retained, stored, or distributed to third parties.
- **Capture:** During checkout, students place their fingers on the fingerprint scanner. In seconds, the system reads distinctive fingerprint features and processes them through an algorithm, which turns the fingerprint into a unique string of characters, serving as the student's unique identifier. This unique identifier is stored on a secure, encrypted database within the school and is used to verify students accounts at the checkout.
- **Authentication:** The student's unique identifier securely matches the live fingerprint to their cashless account, and the transaction can now occur.

Advantages of using biometrics in schools

Biometric recognition is a straightforward way to recognise students without risking losing cards or forgetting passwords. Whether to register attendance at the start of the day, identify students at the dining hall's point of sale, or authorise transactions in the school shop, biometrics offers a straightforward way to identify and authenticate students.

On average, it takes just seconds for a student to place their fingerprint on the biometric scanner and then the system to identify their account, offering a fast and efficient authentication process.



Security of biometrics

Biometrics, in this case, provides a unique identifier for the person present. 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 fingerprint 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.

How do I get started?

Like all biometric recognition methods, fingerprint recognition requires consent. If you would like to use this software, please sign and return the consent form below to Student Services. Alternatively, log onto the Arbor App or Arbor Parent Portal. Under each student, "Notices" will appear at the top – please select the Biometric line to electronically opt in.

FAQs

What are biometrics?

Biometrics is a technology that recognises people based on their unique characteristics and identifies possible matches to ensure accurate and secure identification. Fingerprint biometrics identifies individuals based on the individual pattern of ridges and valleys on their fingerprints and is used to provide accurate and reliable identification.

Can any other agency or 3rd party use the finger impressions?

No, the information is never shared, and the numbers representing the fingerprints are meaningless to anyone else. The software turns your child's finger impression into a mathematical algorithm and discards it, and the stored information cannot be used to recreate the finger impression.

What happens when my child leaves the school?

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

What if I object to my child using fingerprint biometrics?

Parents and students reserve the right to object to using fingerprint recognition. Any student wishing to opt-out will be issued an alternative identification method, which will be a unique PIN.



Biometrics Opt-In Form

I consent to the school including my child in the fingerprint biometric registration process

Name of Pupil:

Year:

Tutor Group:

Name of guardian or parent:

Signed:

Date:

Please fill out this form and return to Student Services.