

12-May-26

### **Important Updates to Catering and Cashless Payments from July 2026**

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of the wider developments taking place across Thomas Gainsborough School from September 2026, I am writing to share details of important changes to our catering provision and cashless payment systems which will begin during the summer term.

These changes form part of our continued work to improve the day-to-day experience for students, staff and families. Alongside supporting our move to two 30-minute break times from September 2026, the new systems will help improve the speed of service at busy times, create a more streamlined experience for families through one central platform, and further strengthen the healthy food offer available across the school.

Over recent months, students have already sampled some of the new menu additions and the feedback has been incredibly positive. We are looking forward to building on this further with a refreshed menu that places a greater emphasis on balanced, nutritious meals whilst continuing to offer choice for students throughout the day.

From Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026, Thomas Gainsborough School will move fully cashless across all catering outlets for all stakeholders.

This means:

- Students and staff will no longer use cash to purchase food onsite
- Catering balances will move to Arbor Pay
- New self-serve Fusion Kiosks will be introduced across the school
- Students and staff will access catering accounts using biometric fingerprint recognition or a unique 6-digit PIN

Ms Katie Robertson, Operations Manager, will be overseeing the implementation process and supporting families throughout the transition period.

#### **Biometric Scanning**

To support the new system, we will be introducing biometric fingerprint recognition for catering purchases.

This system works in a very similar way to fingerprint recognition used on mobile phones and allows students and staff to access catering balances quickly and securely at the kiosks and tills.

Importantly, no fingerprint image is ever stored. The system converts the fingerprint into an encrypted mathematical code which cannot be recreated into a fingerprint image. This information is securely stored and used solely for identification within the catering system.

Parents and carers who do not wish their child to use biometric recognition can opt out, and students will instead be issued with a unique 6-digit PIN to use at catering points.

A biometric consent form is attached to this letter and can also be downloaded from [www.tgschool.net/2026](http://www.tgschool.net/2026). Completed paper copies can be returned to your child's tutor. In addition, an electronic consent form is available via the Arbor App, under Notices on each student's profile.



### Key Dates

Date	Event
4 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Biometric registration day
30 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Current Schoolcomms /School Gateway catering top-up system closes
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2026	Catering balance migration begins from 2.00pm following lunch service
2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2026	School becomes fully cashless
2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2026	Fusion Kiosks go live across the school
2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2026	Arbor Pay catering balances available after 1.00pm

### Important Information for Families

Please note that from 30<sup>th</sup> June until 2<sup>nd</sup> July, parents and carers will not be able to top up catering accounts whilst balances transfer to the new system. We would therefore ask families to ensure sufficient funds are available before this point.

Cash will continue to be accepted up to and including 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 only.

It is also very important that parents do not attempt to add money to Arbor Pay before 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026, as these funds will not transfer into catering accounts during the migration process. Further guidance regarding Arbor Pay will be shared closer to the launch date.

### Free School Meals

Students entitled to Free School Meals will continue to receive their allocation through the new system automatically. However, it remains important that parents and carers access the Arbor App moving forward, as this will allow families to monitor purchases, manage balances and receive key school communications.

### Arbor App

As we continue to streamline communication and systems across the school, the Arbor App will become an increasingly important part of how we communicate with families moving forward. If you have not yet registered or accessed Arbor, I would strongly encourage you to do so over the coming weeks.

Further information, FAQs and updates will continue to be shared via: [www.tgschool.net/2026](http://www.tgschool.net/2026)

Thank you, as always, for your continued support as we continue to strengthen the provision and experience we offer for all students at Thomas Gainsborough School.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Lewis  
Headteacher

