



Catering and Smartcards

The canteen is open for breakfast at 8 - 8:30am; break 10:45 - 11am and lunch time 12:45 – 1:25pm.

The smart card is a swipe card and it is the only way to purchase food in the canteen. (Money can be preloaded onto it via bank transfer or the cash loader in the canteen.) This helps reduce queues at the tills and ensures that money is spent on school meals and not elsewhere. Healthy eating is important to us, therefore all food sold in the canteen is now prepared daily on site using fresh ingredients. This includes all of our cakes and treats. Our water is carbonated and flavoured with natural fruit juice. Crisps that are sold, are baked and under 100 calories.

A maximum daily spend limit can also be set to control how much can be spent in one day. Pupils must remember that items purchased at breakfast or at break, count as part of their daily limit. The default limit is £5 per day. Once daily limits or food restrictions are in place they cannot be changed without an email or phone call from a parent or carer to the Canteen Manager Mrs Barford via admin@verulam.herts.sch.uk. We recommend a spend limit of **£3.50** per day and it is a good idea to pay **£30.00** to top up your child's card prior to them starting school in September.

Loading money on to the smart card.

Our preferred method is online payment via ParentMail.

Online

During the last week of August, you will be able to pay for your child's meals online and this is encouraged by the school as a direct way of paying for your child's meals once the Autumn Term has started. Please also note that online ParentPay payments are allocated daily at 10.00am. Parents using the system are encouraged to load the payment the evening before. There is no guarantee that a payment put through the system after 10.00am will be allocated until the following day.

Once money has been loaded onto a smartcard by any payment method, please note it cannot be taken off the catering account to get cash.

Cash

A Cashloader is located in the canteen. If you were unable to top up your child's dinner money online, then children can bring in cash which will be able to upload onto his Smartcard.

Cheques

As a last resort, cheques can be made payable to **ABM Catering**, with your child's name, form and lunch written on the back and taken to Mrs Barford, Canteen Manager. Cheques can take up to 24 hours to be processed.

What to do if cards are damaged or lost

Smart cards need to be brought into school every day and should be kept in the pupil's possession at all times. Cards must be shown to gain entry to the canteen. Any cards which are defaced or damaged will need to be replaced by the pupil at a cost of £5. Any lost cards must be reported immediately to Mr D Smyth in the Library. Once a card is reported lost, it can be deactivated until found or replaced. If your child forgets his/her card and needs to gain entry to the canteen, he/she may obtain a one day temporary card from Mr D Smyth, Librarian. Temporary cards can be obtained at break time only (and only at other times i.e. lunch under exceptional circumstances).

Loans

If a child realises that there is insufficient money on the card to buy lunch, then a loan (£3.00 maximum) can be obtained at the school's discretion for a meal. The money will be credited to the smart card. We do not give out cash. Loans must be repaid the following day or the card will be disabled until a payment is received. If your child needs cash for some reason i.e. bus fare then they should go to Student Services where this can be dealt with.



Free School Meal Allowance

If you feel your child may be entitled to free school meals or have any queries, please contact Hertfordshire County Council Financial Help Section on 0300 1234 048 or apply online: website www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals. As soon as the relevant processes have been completed by parents/carers with the local authority and the school has been notified, then the free school meal allowance will automatically be credited to the pupil's smart card on a daily basis. This allowance is only available at lunchtime. Any unused meal allowance will be returned to HCC and does not accumulate on the pupil's account. If your child needs more than the current allowance of £2.30, then extra money from home can be added to their account by cash or cheque, or by using online ParentPay once term has started.

Students will be given their Smartcard on their first day in September.