

April 2025



**The South Wolds  
Academy  
and Sixth Form**

### **Facial Recognition is coming to The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form**

We're excited to announce that Facial Recognition will be live at The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form from September 2025 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 pupils, 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 pupils.

#### **Why The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form is introducing Facial Recognition**

Facial Recognition offers a quick and secure way for students to purchase school meal items without needing cash and the risk of losing cards or forgetting passwords. With Facial Recognition, pupils 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 pupils. Our goal is to help pupils reclaim time to enjoy their meal breaks and nutritious meals and make it easier to attend lunch clubs.

#### **How the technology works**

With Facial Recognition technology, pupils 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 technology. Like a PIN, a unique identifier is attributed to each pupil 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 pupil.

When pupils 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**

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

2. **Capture:** The biometric system captures an image of the pupils' 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 school meal transactions.

2. **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 pupil's unique identifier. This unique identifier is stored on a secure, encrypted database within the school and is used to verify pupils' accounts at the checkout.

3. **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 pupils. A picture of the pupil 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.

### How do I get started?

Like all biometric recognition methods, Facial Recognition requires consent. If you would like your student to use this software, please sign and return the consent form below to the school office, alternatively a copy can be emailed to [office@southwolds.uk](mailto:office@southwolds.uk)

## Facial Recognition Consent

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

I consent ☐

I do not consent ☐

## 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 biometrics 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 pupil data is stored and where?

Biometric recognition operates on a closed-loop system, which means pupil 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 pupils' 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 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 Facial Recognition? Can my child still purchase school meals?

Parents and pupils reserve the right to object to using Facial Recognition. Any pupil 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 pupils that have consented to use Facial Recognition. The system is not live; the cameras only capture pupils' images for the transaction process when the Point of Sale staff activates the software.

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