



Facial Recognition at The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form

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.

This technology is used as an additional authentication method at the checkout counters, providing faster service for pupils.

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.

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.

3. 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 that 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.



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.