



Education & Children's Services

Improving Lives Together

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Online Payments FAQs - Secondary schools cashless catering

Can my child still access school meals with cash?

Yes, but we would encourage use of the National Entitlement Card* (NEC) at the till. The NEC provides access to a pupil's account at the till and is by far the quickest way to pay for a meal.

Whilst online payments make it easier and quicker for families to add value to their child's meal account, cash can also be added at the till in three ways:

- 1. Adding value (requires the NEC)** - A cash sum is added to a pupil's account by simply handing payment to the cashier e.g. £10. This will be added to the account immediately and any meal transaction deducted at the same time.
- 2. Cashback (requires the NEC)** - A large note can be added to a pupil's account by simply handing payment to the cashier e.g. £10 or £20 and requesting £5 or £10 respectively back. The balance will be added to a pupil's account and any meal transaction deducted at the same time.
- 3. Cash (no NEC required)**- simply pay for the transaction value only at the time of purchase. There is no remaining balance available to be added to the account. This method of payment takes on average 3x longer to progress through the till point and delays everybody else in the queue.

*Incorporates Young Scot

What if I lose my NEC or don't have it with me?

If you have not yet applied for your NEC or you lose it, see your Cook in Charge. It's important if you are issued with a temporary card that this is returned to the Cook in Charge once you have your NEC as your meals account will not recognise the NEC number until the temporary card is de-registered. Temporary cards do not affect your account in any way and do not affect the online payments process.

If you lose your NEC, contact Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000 to arrange for a replacement.

Are there any other reasons to use the NEC?

You may not be aware but there are good reasons to load value onto your NEC other than speed of service:

- **Pre-order**
Use your NEC to place your meal order at the electronic pre-order kiosk or through the APP (available in most schools) - that way you can reduce queuing time and have your choice of food items bagged and ready for collection.

- **Free meals**

If you are registered to receive free meals, £2.15 (2015-16) is added to your account daily - use your NEC to access that spend each day - its worth over £400 a year.

Note: Unspent value is removed daily.

- **Food vendors**

Some secondary schools have food vendors which accept payment by your NEC. If you are in a *Community Campus*, pupil prices are **only** available by using your NEC as the cash price has to be offered to the general public at a higher rate!

Further information on school meals is available on the Perth & Kinross Council [website](#).

What if I leave school and there's money on my account? (applies to all schools)

If you have paid online, simply contact the school office to confirm arrangements and the value remaining on your account will be credited back to your card.

