

LANCASTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Dr D R Rowe Assistant Head of Information and Systems

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Dear Parent/Guardian

Parental Permission for use of Biometrics – Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

As of 1 September 2013 schools and sixth form colleges need to obtain written parental consent to use pupils' biometric data in an automated recognition system. Both parents and any other person with parental responsibility for all pupils under the age of 18 must be notified before using the child's biometric data as part of an automated biometric recognition system. The Act requires us to obtain the permission of at least one parent before processing a child's biometric information. It also prohibits us from processing a child's information if a parent withdraws his/her consent or otherwise objects. Please note that any objection must be made to the School in writing.

We currently use biometric systems for catering services. The system works in the following way: a logarithmical numerical value is derived from the child's fingerprint when it is first placed on the reading device; it is this logarithmical numerical value which is then stored. Each time the child's fingerprint is subsequently re-read, a logarithmical numerical value is again generated. This is compared with the set of stored logarithmical values, uniquely identifying the child within the population of the School if a match is found. We do not keep an image of the fingerprint.

One of the benefits of using biometric systems instead of card readers is the avoidance of lost cards. If we were to use card systems pupils may be inconvenienced by interruption to services by the loss of cards. There may also be a financial implication for parents if pupils were to lose their cards, as we may need to charge for replacements.

We have used biometric systems for many years and have not had any issues with their use. It is only as a result of the recent Act and the requirement to obtain parental permission that we are contacting you. Should any parent refuse to give permission for the use of their child's biometric data we will be obliged to provide reasonable alternative means by which their data can be processed. This will be by the provision of a card. However, administration of additional systems could create an unnecessary administrative burden and incur additional costs to the School from funds which could be used more effectively elsewhere towards providing your child's education.

Yours faithfully

Dr David R Rowe
Assistant Headmaster