

# UK schools are using facial recognition to take pupils' lunch money

## Vocabulary Match

- |                 |                    |                             |                           |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. to verify    | 8. to distribute   | ___ under contract          | ___ authenticate          |
| 2. hygienic     | 9. encrypted       | ___ spying                  | ___ be involved           |
| 3. to advocate  | 10. alternatively  | ___ sanitary                | ___ as a matter of choice |
| 4. to normalize | 11. pilots         | ___ experiments             | ___ to circulate          |
| 5. biometric    | 12. opt-in         | ___ a leaflet               | ___ standardize           |
| 6. surveillance | 13. be responsible | ___ biological measurements | ___ campaign for          |
| 7. a flyer      |                    | ___ encoded                 |                           |

## Article

A group of nine schools in the UK have started using facial recognition to verify children's payments for school meals. The schools in North Ayrshire in Scotland claim that using the technology is faster and more hygienic than taking payments using cards or fingerprint scanners, but privacy advocates warn that the move is normalizing biometric surveillance.

"With Facial Recognition, pupils simply select their meal, look at the camera and go, making for a faster lunch service whilst removing any contact at the point of sale," reads a flyer distributed to parents by the schools. An FAQ sheet says that children's biometric data is stored in an encrypted form and deleted when a child leaves the school. Parents have to opt-in for children to use the technology, and can alternatively use PIN to verify payments.

David Swanston, managing director of CRB Cunninghams, the firm responsible for installing the technology, told The Financial Times that facial recognition cut payment time per pupil to five seconds on average. Swanston said pilots of the system had begun in 2020, and that 65 more schools were signed up to introduce the technology.

*Based on an Oct 18th, 2021 article from The Verge (All Rights Reserved) [theverge.com]*

## Quiz

1. Why have the schools in North Ayrshire adopted facial recognition?
2. What happens when a child leaves the school?

## Conversation

- A: Mum, I'm starving! I went to the canteen for lunch, but they wouldn't take my card!
- B: Oh Johnny, you don't need the card anymore. They've got that facial recognition thing now.
- A: I don't know, mum. They said I need a PIN or something like that.
- B: No, you should just look at the camera. But just in case, your number is...erm... 1234.

## Discussion

1. How did you get school meals when you were a student? Was there a choice of food?
2. What do you think about the schools' introduction of facial recognition?
3. What is facial recognition technology used for in your country?
4. People are concerned that our privacy is being eroded. What do you think about that?