



Baumholder Students Pay For Lunch With PIN

By John Vandiver, *Stars and Stripes*

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BAUMHOLDER, Germany — Students in Baumholder no longer have to keep track of their coupons as they make their way through the school lunch line. Instead, they just need to commit to memory a four-digit personal ID number.

Baumholder schools converted to an electronic pay system at cafeterias earlier this month, following in the footsteps of Kaiserslautern area schools, which made the transition about two years ago.

Sonja Gates, who manages the school meal program for the **Army and Air Force Exchange Service**, said the transition to the code system at Baumholder means no more hassles about lost coupons and tedious paperwork.

“It’s much more efficient. You don’t have to worry about them getting lost and parents have a whole lot more control,” Gates said.

Students at Baumholder High School and Middle School made the switch to the new system at the beginning of the month, followed by Wetzel and Smith elementary schools.

At Baumholder Middle School last week students streamed through the lunch line, punching in their codes without hesitation. In a couple instances, though, students forgot a digit or two.

No problem, said the cashier.

“Where’s your name?” the cashier asked one of the students.

The data then popped on screen.

“Tell your mom to put some money in the account,” the worker reminded the student.

Gates said parents can set spending limits on the account and put in extra money for snacks. When students run out of money, cashiers can credit accounts so that a student doesn’t go without lunch, Gates said.

The system also provides a certain amount of privacy for needy students on free and reduced lunch programs. In the past there were slight differences in the coupons used for the free and reduced program.

“Now there’s no way to tell the difference. You just give your code,” said Danny Robinson, principal at Baumholder High School and Middle School.

So far, the transition to the new system has gone off without a hitch, Robinson said.