

HELP LINES



For all assistance / enquiries: Telephone: 08 450 450 973
Email: ict.helpline@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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Issue 28

Please ensure the following members of staff receive a copy of this newsletter:-

School Secretary/Administrator ICT Technician Headteacher Exams Officer Bursar / Finance Officer
Attendance Operator Dinner Money Operator SENCO Timetabler Assessment Co-ordinator

Please e-mail any requests for items to be included in the February edition of *Helplines* to: ict.helpline@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The Helpline would like to wish all our Schools a Very Happy New Year.



January School Census 2008

Thursday 17th January

department for
children, schools and families
COLLECT Portal

Visit the Sims Home Page on the Portal and the ISSIS Home Page for the most up to date guidance and advice for running the School Spring Census.

The DCSF "School Census Preparation and Guidance 2008" is essential reading for all schools as it provides detailed instructions on exactly what information is required for each of the three 2008 Census returns.

N.B. Schools must have carried out the November SIMS upgrade and be on at least version 7.98 to be able to run the Spring Census.

On validating your census many schools will see failure code 1970 — "Pupil boarder indicator is invalid" for students who are no longer on roll. This is a fault with the DCSF validation and will have to be ignored.

Please check that all Extended services provided by your school are being reported. Consult pages 56-58 of the DCSF notes for guidance on what services should be included.

There is one new data item being collected this year - Service Children in Education indicator along with the Source of this information. Bulk update can be used to input this information, or it can be entered directly onto the Additional Information panel of Student Details.

The Helpline have uploaded a document to the Portal - "Common Problems with Spring Census - FAQs". We would strongly recommend that all schools read this document.

This year the Census should be uploaded to the Collect Website:

<https://data.dcsf.gov.uk/COLLECTPortalLive/login.aspx>

The site will only go live on 17th January. If you would like to upload a dummy census before that date, use the Familiarisation Collect Website:

<https://datauat.dfes.gov.uk/SchoolCensusFamiliarisation/MainPage.aspx/>

If you encounter problems trying to upload your return please try again later in the day. Please also read the Guidance notes on using the Collect Site (these are available from the Portal on the Sims or ISSIS home pages). Your Census return undergoes a more in-depth validation once it has been uploaded. All Errors and Queries need to be investigated. All queries that are correct need to have a note confirming that the query has been investigated and agreed. Once you are satisfied that your file is correct you must then click on the Submit button to release it to the ISSIS team.

Good Practice - Student Data in SIMS .net

Please ensure datafields in SIMS .net **ONLY** contain the information specified by the datafield name i.e. the **Legal Forename** box should **ONLY** contain the **LEGAL FORENAME** (not the preferred/chosen name too, even in brackets) Similarly the **Legal Surname** must contain **ONLY** the **LEGAL SURNAME**. The middle name box can contain several middle names but please do not put commas between the names. Incorrect data in incorrect fields can cause major problems when data is transferred electronically to ISSIS, DCSF and other schools



FMS6 Migration to SQL2005



All schools have now carried out the migration of SIMS .net to the new SQL database. However, schools' FMS6 databases now also need to be migrated. This is a rather different process because financial data is involved and schools will need to check summary reports drawn from the system before and after carefully to ensure all data has carried across successfully into the new database. **Schools on central hosting will only have to ensure reports are run and checked as the technical aspects of the migration will be done for you.**

Schools should plan to carry out this procedure shortly after the start of February. We would like all schools to be migrated before April because the new CFR is only available on versions of FMS running on the new system. Guidance notes on performing this migration are available from Finance on the SIMS Home Page on the Portal.

The first step of this migration is to Upgrade to version 6.85 of FMS6. This has now been made available to all Bank Account Schools via Solus. Schools on central hosting are already on the correct version of FMS.

Schools with patch support may ask their technician to carry out the technical part of upgrade, but will still be expected to check the data before and after. Schools without patch support may request the ICT Service to do the technical upgrade but this will be chargeable. Please call the Helpline about this service.

The Migration Licence is a separate upgrade file which will only be released to schools that confirm by e-mail that all the pre-migration backups and benchmark reports have been run.

If you are running more than one FMS database (this applies to most secondary schools and a few primary schools), then each database has to be migrated separately. Please contact the Helpline if this applies to you.



Spring Cleaning of FMS6



The end of the financial year may seem a long way off, however, the process of Year End actually covers almost half the year, from the start of preparation to final close. It usually starts shortly after Christmas and continues until around mid-June. It is not continuous and can be done in small segments throughout this period. At this time you should be thinking about setting up the new financial year. Setting up the new VAT Year and the New Salary Year. (Please remember you can only have 2 years open, so if you have not closed 05/06 you will need to do this before opening 08/09).

You should also be thinking about carrying out a 'Spring clean' of your system. Start checking orders and chasing late ones. Slowing down the creation of purchase orders. Giving staff a closing order book date - keep reminding them of this cut off date.



Sims .net QuickletterTemplate



Schools that regularly use the Quickletter from Student Details in SIMS .net may have experienced some problems with the template recently. The June/August upgrade changed the template to a different format. The reason for this was to enable more data fields etc. to be available to this template. This change of format however created a lot of problems, specifically with letterheads etc. The November upgrade restored the original format of the template.

Any Schools that experience problems with Quickletter after the November upgrade need to carry out a short procedure. First ensure that the Macro Security level in Word is set to Medium. Next locate the QuickletterTemplate.rtf that is located at c:\program files\sims\sims .net. Open this template, enabling the macros if requested. Once the template is open, click on the "save" button and then close the document.. Now open the QuickLetterTemplate.doc, again enable the macros when asked. Click on the "Save and Close Button". You may be asked who to save it for — your choice here. Now try running the Quickletter from a Student's Details.

Course Manager

Another half day Course Manager Training Session has been arranged for 24th January 9.30 - 12.30. We would strongly recommend that **all secondary schools** that have not attended Course Manager training book themselves on to this session. This Application within Sims .net has a crucial role in Learning Aims, Exams and Assessment.

Wednesday 20th February 2008 - Maintaining the Timetable in NovaT6

The November release of SIMS.net introduced some new functionality which means simple timetable changes (including teacher rotations) can now be made within SIMS .net Academic Management rather than using NovaT6. While this is welcome in many respects it does mean that these changes will be wiped out if in future you use NOVAT6 unless you use a maintenance dataset and the one day course will address this and other issues.

Key Dates....

- ♦ School Spring Census - Thursday 17th January 2008
- ♦ SIMS .net for new users 2 days - 15th & 22nd Apr
- ♦ SIMS .net Reporting - 22nd Feb
- ♦ AM7 for Primaries - 28th Jan & 6th Feb, 29th Apr & 8th May
- ♦ Sims SENCO - 19th Feb
- ♦ Sims Personnel 7 - 29th Feb
- ♦ Maintaining the Timetable Secondaries - 20th Feb
- ♦ Analysing Assessment Data & Sims - 6th Mar

For booking and availability of *all* courses listed:

Telephone: (01480) 376670

Email: ict.courses@cambridgeshire.gov.uk



For details of ALL ICT Courses please check the [SIMS Home Page](#) and click on the *Training Planet*; this will allow you to view all of our Administrative and Curriculum Courses available throughout the Academic year.