

HELP LINES



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

November 2008
Issue 36

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 November edition of *Helplines* to: ict.helpline@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

School Spring Census - Thursday 15th January 2009

department for
children, schools and families
COLLECT Portal

The software necessary for running the Spring Census is contained in the November SIMS upgrade. We will be releasing this to schools in mid to late November, once we have had the opportunity to test it. Centrally Hosted schools will be upgraded during the next scheduled downtime of 6th December.

New for 2009

Contact Information - For the first time this Census will collect addresses and main telephone numbers for Student Contacts who have Parental Responsibility ticked in Contact Details, or who are recorded as being Mother, Father, Step Mother, Step Father, Foster Mother, Foster Father or Carer in SIMS. Search for Resource number 4459 on the Portal.

Funded Hours for 3 and 4 Year Olds - Schools with Nursery and/or Reception age pupils will be required to provide this data as part of the census for the first time.

Helpline Notes will be posted on the Portal as soon as we have had the opportunity to obtain screenshots from the new software.

DCSF Notes have also been posted on the Portal. Please note, this year the notes are the same for all school phases. These notes will be required for guidance on all three Schools Census Returns in 2009, Spring, Summer and Autumn. The DCSF notes are an **ESSENTIAL** point of reference for **ALL** schools. They explain exactly what data will be collected in each Return, what should be included and what excluded. Currently only Draft Notes are available, we will replace these as soon as the official notes are published. These can also be obtained from the Teachernet.gov.uk website.

Census Briefings will be held in December, when the new items will be explained with tips on preparing for Census and checking your data is correct. There will also be **hands on training** for new users, or those wanting in-depth practice on preparing and generating the Spring Census.

November SIMS Upgrade

This upgrade is **essential for all schools** as it contains the software necessary for carrying out the School Spring Census. Centrally Hosted Schools will all be upgraded during the next scheduled down-time on 6th December.

This upgrade also brings in the additional Lookups for Contact Relationship to Student i.e. Foster Mother and Foster Father replace Foster parent and Step Father and Step Mother replace Step Parent. Most contacts will automatically be assigned the correct gender specific tag, using gender and/or title in the contact details to assign as appropriate. There may however be a few instances that fall through the net eg. a Dr with no gender assigned. It may be worth creating a SIMS report of student name and contact names and relationship, to check for inaccuracies. Alternatively, if a dummy Spring Census is run, this contains a new detailed report for Contact information that should prove helpful.

This upgrade will also update the CTF version to version 8, which includes the ability to export Unique Learner Numbers (where appropriate) and more school history will be transferred.

Improvements to Address Tidy and Merge Routines. Schools wishing to run this routine will need to request the licence patch from the Helpline. This patch can then be applied using Solus, Centrally Hosted schools will have this patch applied for them on request.



FMS6 Upgrades

The latest version of FMS is FMS 6.106. If you are running FMS 6 please check that you are on this version. You can check your version within FMS by clicking on Help at the top of the screen and then selecting About SIMS FMS module. If you are NOT on version FMS 6.106 please contact the ICT Helpline on 0845 0450973.



Student Data in SIMS

Schools often find it very difficult to obtain all the data they require for students for the Census. Despite issuing Data Collection Sheets each year, many are not returned, or are returned with incomplete information. Often the best time for obtaining information, particularly data areas such as 1st Language and Ethnicity, is from the Admission Form when the student is first admitted. To this end we have uploaded a Blank Admission Form on the Portal which schools can download and personalise if they wish. This particular form should contain all the data fields required in SIMS, the panel for obtaining information on ethnicity, 1st language etc. is very clear, which will hopefully encourage parents/carers to complete it. This Blank Admission form is Resource ID. 4474 on the Portal.

Telephone numbers - on entering contact information, many schools do not enter the STD codes for local telephone numbers. This has not mattered in the past, as they were purely for local information, unfortunately, this can cause problems when the data is used as part of a central database. As schools' data is to be used as a basis for Contact Point, plus the School Census collecting main telephone number for contacts with parental responsibility, it is now becoming necessary for these codes to be present. The lack of STD code should not cause an error or query in the next Census, however, schools should note that these codes will need to be added to contact information. The code can just be copied and pasted into each record. As an additional tip, we would recommend that a space is left between the code and the number, this can on occasion prevent the leading zero being dropped when the main telephone number is used as a data field for SIMS .net reports that are sent out to Excel.

E-mail Exchange Migration

The migration from Digitalbrain e-mail to Exchange e-mail began on Monday 3rd November. Our target is to migrate all participating schools to the new e-mail system by March 2009.

Many of you by now will have completed the electronic form and know when your school will be migrated. If you have not returned your form, someone from the ICT Service will contact you shortly to offer any assistance and answer any questions you may have.

We have created a Frequently Asked Questions site which aims to answer any questions you might have about the benefits of the new system and the migration approach. Any queries please contact the Helpline on 0845 0450973.

Spring Census Briefings + Schools Workforce Return

Census Briefings will be held in December, we would encourage schools to attend, these provide the opportunity for the ISSIS Team and ourselves to provide a brief overview of the process in SIMS. We also look at new data items and how to check your data. Plus a look at how to use the new COLLECT website. This is also your opportunity to ask any questions you might have. Each session will last for an hour and a half and is free of charge. This year's Briefings will also include information on the Schools Workforce Census 2010, what it involves and what schools need to be doing in preparation:-

Wednesday 10th December Over Community Centre 9.30 11.30 14.00
Thursday 11th December - Oliver Cromwell in March 9.30 11.30 14.00

Briefing Sessions of just 45 minutes covering only School Workforce Return will be held on:-

Thursday 4th December - Buckden Community Centre 9.30, 10.30, 11.30, 1.00

Places are limited, so please book via the ISSIS team on 01480 355965 or 355969 as soon as possible.

The School Workforce Census is a new **statutory** census collection. Although the collection deadlines are some way off schools **MUST** start putting staff absence (**including absence for training**) into their Personnel module. This must happen from **January 2009** to meet reporting requirements for January 2010. Please make use of the census briefings to bring yourself up to date with this.

Key Dates....

- ♦ 18th Nov (G) - RAISEonline
- ♦ 18th Nov (G) - SENCO
- ♦ 12th, 13th, 17th Nov - Impulse Conferences
- ♦ 25th Nov, 2nd Dec - FMS Refresher Course.
- ♦ 19th (G), 20th (WB), 26th (WB) Nov, 4th (G) Dec — Attendance 7
- ♦ 10th (OV), 11th (OC) Dec — Census Briefings
- ♦ 8th & 14th Jan - Managing Student Data (SIMS for new users)
- ♦ 7th, 9th, 13th Jan - School Census Primary Hands-on Training
- ♦ 29th Jan - RAISEonline Data Management

For booking and availability of *all* courses listed:

Telephone: (01480) 376670

Email: ict.courses@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

G = Godmanchester. WB = Waterbeach

OV = Over Community Centre. OC = Oliver Cromwell March

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

