

SIMS InTouch enables the sending of messages between your school and any person recorded in your SIMS system, e.g. members of staff, parents, contacts, etc. This functionality provides for a more efficient flow of information between your school and any of its contacts.

Messages that have been sent and received are viewed and managed via the **My Messages** and **School Messages** panels on the SIMS **Home Page** (via **Focus | Home Page**).

Files can be attached to any messages sent, but the size of a message, including any file attachments or images, must not exceed 4MB.

## Sending General Messages

General messages can be sent from a number of areas in SIMS InTouch and can be broken down into message sub-types. The type of general message generated is determined by your location in SIMS when the messaging functionality is triggered.

Select **Focus | InTouch | Send Message** or click the **Send Message** button on the toolbar to display the **Send General Message** page.



Send Message button

### Selecting the Recipient(s) of the Message

People recorded as being contactable via SIMS internal message, email or SMS can be selected as a message recipient. If an intended recipient's details are not recorded in SIMS, a mobile telephone number or email address can be entered directly.

1. Click the **To** button to display the **Search** browser.
2. Change the **Category** of person, if required, then enter all or part of the intended recipient's **Name** then click the **Search** button.

3. To expand or contract the view to show the names of the people in each category, click the adjacent arrow button(s).

The icons in the column header indicate the method by which each person displayed in the browser can be contacted.

4. Select the check box(es) of the preferred method(s) of communication for each intended recipient.

Individuals can be selected by selecting the check box adjacent to their name. Select everyone in a category by selecting the check box adjacent to the category name. Select the **All Results** check box above the search results to select everyone in the browser.

Remove a selected recipient by deselecting their check box. Remove everyone in a category by deselecting the check box adjacent to the category name.

5. Click the **OK** button.
6. Enter a mobile telephone number or email address, if required.

### Selecting a Template for the Message

Templates enable you to alter the look and feel of your messages. Select the template you wish to apply to the message (if required) by clicking the **Templates** button then selecting the required template from the pop-up menu.

**NOTE:** The option to select an alternative template is available *only* if more than one template for this message type has been defined.

### Entering a Subject Heading and Message Text

Enter a **Subject** heading for the message, if required. Enter the text of the **Message**. The text entered can be formatted using the toolbar at the top of the **Message** panel.

### Formatting Message Text

A number of formatting options are available, enabling you to change the look and feel of a message.

- Change the font (select the required text then select a font from the drop-down list).
- Change the font size (select the required text then select a font size from the drop-down list).
- Embolden text (select the required text then click the **Bold** button to toggle between normal and emboldened text).
- Italicise text (select the required text then click the **Italicise** button to toggle between normal and italicised text).
- Underline text (select the required text then click the **Underline** button to toggle between normal and underlined text).
- A bulleted or numbered list can be included in your message. Place the cursor into the line you wish to add bullets or numbering then click the **Bullet List** or **Number List** button.
- Text can be left-aligned, centred or right-aligned across the page. Place the cursor into the appropriate line then click the **Left Align**, **Centre** or **Right Align** button.

### Selecting Data Fields

A range of pupil/student, school, etc. related data can be extracted from the SIMS database and included as part of your message text.

For example, instead of repeatedly entering your school name in each message, you can insert the <SchoolName> tag. When the message is sent, SIMS replaces the tag with the appropriate data stored in the database (e.g. Green Abbey School). Tags can be entered by placing the cursor in the appropriate area of the message text then selecting from the **School Data Items** or **Pupil/Student Data Items** drop-down lists.



School Data  
Items button



Pupil/Student Data  
Items button

### Inserting a Hyperlink into the Message Text

Hyperlinks can be inserted into the message text, which is particularly useful if you wish to provide a link to the school website.

1. Enter the text you wish to use as the hyperlink text.
2. Highlight the entered text, ensuring you do *not* select any additional trailing spaces or the 'invisible' paragraph marker.
3. Click the **Hyperlink** button to display the **Insert Hyperlink** dialog.



Hyperlink button

4. Enter the **URL**.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You must enter `http://`, `\\` or `file://` as part of the **URL**.

5. Click the **OK** button. The hyperlink text is underlined and displayed in blue.

When a recipient reads a message that includes a hyperlink, clicking the hyperlink displays the website in a web browser.

**NOTE:** It is not possible to access a hyperlink from an internal message.



### Attaching Files or Images to the Message

1. Click the **Attach Files** button to display the **Open** dialog.
  2. Navigate to the file, highlight it then click the **Open** button.  
To remove an attachment added in error, right-click it then select **Remove attachment** from the pop-up menu.
- To insert an image, copy it from your image editing software then select **Edit | Paste** in SIMS. It can be removed by clicking the **Delete** key.
- The size of the message is now displayed above the **Message** panel.

### Changing the Message Type

Not applicable to General Messages

The message type can be changed by selecting from the **Set Type** pop-up menu.

### Setting the Priority of a Message

The default priority is **Normal** and this is indicated on the button label.

1. Click the **Normal** button then select the appropriate priority from the pop-up menu.
2. Change the priority again by clicking the same button (named differently to **Normal**, if the priority has already been changed) and repeat the selection process.

### Previewing a Message

A message can be previewed prior to sending.

1. Click the **Preview** button to display the **Select Recipients** dialog.
2. Select the appropriate check boxes, filter view then click the **Preview** button to display the **Print Preview** page.
3. Change the display properties and print the message, if required.
4. Click the **Close** button.

### Sending the Message

Click the **Send** button to send the message. If a message is being sent to an international mobile number, a warning is displayed.

Internal messages are viewed by recipients via the **My Messages** panel on the SIMS **Home Page** (via **Focus | Home Page**).

## Sending an Emergency Alert

It may be necessary for a class teacher to request immediate assistance as a result of an emergency in the classroom. An emergency alert containing default text, which includes the teacher's name and their location, can be sent from anywhere in SIMS and will be sent to the recipients specified in **Tools | Setups | Emergency Alert**.

1. Click the **Send Emergency Alert** button on the main SIMS toolbar.



Send Emergency Alert button

2. Click the **OK** button.

## Managing Received Messages

Any internal messages sent to you are accessible from the **My Messages** panel on the SIMS **Home Page** (via **Focus | Home Page**). Any messages sent from outside your school are accessible from the **School Messages** panel on the SIMS **Home Page**. All incoming messages can be replied to, forwarded, printed and deleted.

In the **My Messages** panel, click the required message to display the **Review a Message** page.

### Viewing Message Attachments

A message can contain one or more attachments. These are indicated by a line labelled **Attachments**, displayed beneath the **Subject** line in the top panel of the page.

Click the attachment to open it. Depending on the type of attachment, it may be possible to save it to your hard drive.

### Adding a Message to the Communication Log

This process adds a record to a pupil/student's communication log, which can be viewed from the **Pupil** (or **Student**) **Details** page (via **Focus | Pupil** (or **Student**) | **Pupil** (or **Student**) **Details** then clicking the **Communication Log** hyperlink in the **Links** panel).

1. Click the **Add to Log** button to display the **Save to Pupil/Student's Communication Log** dialog.
2. Select the radio button relating to the sensitivity of the information you are saving to the log – **Public**, **Private** or **Confidential**.
3. Select the check box relating to the pupil/student(s) whose communication(s) you wish to save.
4. Click the **Save** button to return to the **Review a Message** page.

### Replying to a Message

It is possible to reply to any message that you have received. You can reply to the sender only (**Reply**), or to the sender and all other recipients of the original message (**Reply to All**).

1. Click the **Reply** button or the **Reply to All** button to display the **Send General Message** page.
2. Enter the required text then click the **Send** button to send the message and return to the **Review a Message** page.

Many of the features available when sending a message are also available when replying to a message, i.e. formatting of text, adding file attachments, etc.

### Forwarding a Message

It is possible to forward any message that you have received, perhaps for information purposes. Any files attached to the original message are also forwarded.

1. Click the **Forward** button to display the **Send General Message** page.
2. Select the intended recipient(s) of the message by clicking the **To** button then selecting from the **Search** browser or by entering contact details manually.
3. Enter any additional body text, if required, then click the **Send** button to send the message.

### Previewing a Message

It is possible to preview a message, perhaps to check that any pupil/student data fields are displayed correctly.

1. Click the **Print Preview** button to display the **Print Preview** page.
2. Use the controls in the top left-hand corner of the page to change the display properties and to print the message, if required.
3. Click the **Close** button to close the window and return to the **Review a Message** page.

### Deleting a Message

Once a message has been actioned or if you no longer wish to retain it, the message can be deleted.

1. Click the **Delete** button.
2. Confirm that you wish to delete the message by clicking the **Yes** button or click the **No** button to cancel the deletion.

*NOTE: Messages can also be deleted from the **My Messages** and **School Messages** panels on the SIMS **Home Page**.*

This guide is based on the version of the software (7.138) in use at the time of publication.

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Capita Children's Services, Franklin Court,  
Priory Business Park, Stannard Way, Bedford, MK44 3JZ

Tel: 01234 838080 <http://www.capita-cs.co.uk>