



School Census Return in SIMS Spring 2026

All School Phases





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ICT Schools Team Support

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Email: ICTSchools@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

SchoolsWeb: <https://schoolsweb.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/ict-zone/>

SchoolsWeb | ICT Zone for:

- Latest filesets.
- Additional copies of the census guidance notes.
- Book Census Workshops.
- Book Training Courses and Workshops.
- Guidance and support documentation.

Childrens & Traded Services

Email:

schoolcensus@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

smst@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

SchoolsWeb:

<https://schoolsweb.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/school-management-support/school-census/>

- Data accuracy on returns is the school's responsibility and any changes to information must be made by either uploading a new file or by making manual changes on COLLECT.

DfE COLLECT

- The submission of the School Census for both **LA Maintained Schools** and **Academies** is via **DfE COLLECT**.
- **CTST** *“it is recommended to upload a file on Collect as soon as possible after census date, even if it is not complete, to check for additional DfE validation errors and queries not evident in SIMS”.*
- Refer to CTST **COLLECT Guidance for Schools** for detailed instructions for DfE.
- Refer to DfE **School Census 2025-26 Acceptable Notepad Entries Guidelines** document.
- Contact the **Childrens & Traded Services Team** for support uploading the census return to DfE COLLECT.
- Once the Census has been **uploaded**, errors and queries noted, the census must be **submitted**.
- **The ICT Schools Team are unable to assist with any issues relating to DfE COLLECT.**

Agenda

Spring 2026 Census Return:

- Filesets
- SIMS Version
- Changes to the Spring Return
- Key Dates
- Census Panels
- Preparing SIMS for Census
- Preparing School and Pupil Data
- Statutory Return Tools
- Live Demo – Producing, Completing and Authorising the Census Return
- Q&A's

Filesets

- Onsite server based Schools - Filesets will be placed in S:SIMS/ManifestFiles or Schoolswb.

- Fileset 32xx – Not Yet Available

The DfE has provided Beta files that have not yet been tested by the DfE and are therefore unsuitable for use with finalising a School Census return.

Schools will find them suitable for dry runs of School Census Spring 2026.

- SIMS Connected Schools - The Fileset will be imported by ESS ParentPay

SIMS Version

- To run the return, you must have
SIMS 2025 Autumn Release (7.226) or later installed.
- To check which version of SIMS, select
Help | About SIMS. The version should read **7.226** or later.



Changes to the Spring Census Return

EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium)

This has been restricted to 4-year-olds for all school phases apart from the Nursery School phase.

This changes for School Census Spring 2026 and onwards so that the 4-year-olds restriction also applies to Nursery School phase.

This means that for School Census Spring 2026 onwards eligibility for EYPP is restricted to 4-year-olds taught in years E1, E2, N1 or N2 for all school phases.

Reminders for the Spring Census Return

- Ethnicity is collected for the Spring Census Return
- SEN Status (SEN Provision)
 - **E – Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** – where the LA has issued a **final** plan.
 - **K – SEN Support** – actions have been put in place or will be put in place to support the student with their need once a SEN need or potential SEN need has been identified.
 - **N – No Special Educational Need** - No special educational need has been identified.

N - No Special Educational Need should only be used if a SEN Status was previously assigned but **K** or **E** are not currently relevant.

Reminders for the Spring Census Return

Inclusion of pupils who are not on roll on Census Reference Date (15/01/2026)

As is always the case for School Censuses, leavers (pupils who left before the Census Reference Date) are only included where one or more of the following is applicable (all date spans listed below are inclusive)

- Leaver aged between 4 and 15 on **31/08/2025**, with attendance to be reported for the start of the autumn term to **31/12/2025**.
- Leaver with suspensions between **21/04/2025** and **31/12/2025** to be reported.
- Leaver with permanent exclusion with final governor review between **21/04/2025** and **14/01/2026** to be reported.
- Leaver with Vulnerable Group Bursary Award and/or Discretion Bursary Award learner support between **01/08/2025** and **15/01/2026** to be reported.
- Leaver with funding and monitory between **01/08/2025** and **15/01/2026** to be reported.
- Leaver with alternative provisions between **02/10/2025** and **14/01/2026** to be reported.

Early Years...

The following is an excerpt from version 1.2 of the DfE technical specification.

Autumn 2025	Age ranges	Funded hours	Basis for funding	Expanded hours	Eligibility code	Extended hours
9 months to 1-year-olds	9-month-olds to one-year-olds born between 2024-01-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	X	X	✓	✓	X
Disadvantaged 2-year-olds	2-year-olds born between 2023-01-01 and 2023-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	✓	✓	X	X	X
2-year-olds	2-year-olds born between 2023-01-01 and 2023-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	X	X	✓	✓	X
3-year-olds	3-year-olds born between 2021-09-01 and 2022-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	✓	X	X	✓	✓
4-year-olds	4-year-olds born between 2021-01-01 and 2021-08-31 (inclusive) - for pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	✓	X	X	✓	✓

Key Dates

Census Date: **Thursday 15th January 2026**

DfE COLLECT: Deadline Upload and Submission Dates:

LA Maintained Schools	Friday 16th January @ 5pm
Academies	Friday 25th January @ 5pm

All Schools must upload a census onto COLLECT:

- Schools are required to check COLLECT Reports on a weekly basis following submission to check duplicate data and validation errors.
- This does not have to be the final version, as it can be removed and replaced until the final submission deadline date.

Spring Census Collection Dates

Attendance

01/09/2025 – 31/12/2025

Exclusions

From 21/04/2025 – 31/12/2025

AP Placements

from 02/10/2025 – 15/01/2026

Funding and Monitoring

from 01/08/2025 – 15/01/2026

Free School Meal Eligibility

from 03/10/2025 – 15/01/2026

Learner Support

from 01/08/2025 – 15/01/2026

Preparing SIMS for the School Census

- **School Census Folder** – Archive old census files
- **Import the latest fileset (32XX or later)**

Panels Available for Spring Census

- Census Details
- School Information
- Early Years
- Early Years Pupil Premium Receipt
- 2-Year-Old Basis for Funding
- Class Type (*Infant/Primary only*)
- Top-up Funding
- Post Looked After Arrangements
- Funding & Monitoring
- School Dinner Taken (*Reception, Year 1 & Year 2*)
- Classes
- Pupil/Student Reconciliation
- General
- Admission Appeals
- Attendance

LIVE DEMONSTRATION

- Preparing/Producing the Spring 2026 Census return