



School Census Return in SIMS Autumn 2025

Infant, Primary,
PRU's & Special Schools





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ICT Schools Team Support

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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.

Fileset 3102

- Please note that all DfE validation involving the census date and date ranges will operate incorrectly until Fileset 3102 has been provided and imported.
- Fileset 3102 is the only sensible way to resolve such issues.
- Final stage of testing and will be provided shortly. We will send out notification as soon as the fileset becomes available.

Children's Traded Service Team

Email: schoolcensus@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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

- **24th September 2025 training webinar.**
- A recording will be available shortly afterwards on the School Census page on Schools Web along with all other supporting documents (Checker sheets, COLLECT guidance, acceptable notepad entries etc.).
- There are some changes to the census for this term (both with data items required and school responsibilities) so it would be helpful if colleagues could attend, especially if this is the first census colleagues are responsible for.
- 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.

Key Dates

Census Date: Thursday 2nd October 2025

Checking by Children's & Traded Services (formerly SMST)

LA Maintained Schools ALL - Friday 3rd October 2025 @ 5pm

Primary Academies – Friday 10th October 2025

Post 16 Schools – Monday 3rd November 2025

DfE COLLECT by:

Academies ALL – 1st Submission to COLLECT Direct

Wednesday 29th October 2025

- 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.

COLLECT Closes to Amendments/Resubmissions on:

Wednesday 26th November 2025

Agenda

Autumn 2025 Census Return:

- Autumn Census Key Dates & Collection Dates
- DfE COLLECT
- Changes to the Autumn Return
- SIMS Permissions and Version
- Census Panels
- Preparing SIMS for Census
- Panels Available
- Preparing School and Pupil Data
- Checking and Editing School Information
- Checking and Editing Pupil/Student Level Information
- Statutory Return Tools
- [Live Demo – Producing, Completing and Authorising the Census Return](#)
- Q&A's

DfE COLLECT

- The submission of the School Census for both **LA Maintained Schools** and **Academies** is via **DfE COLLECT**.
- **Children's and Traded Service Team** *"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 **Children's and Traded Service Team COLLECT Guidance for Schools** for detailed instructions for DfE.
- Refer to **DfE School Census 2025-2026 Acceptable Notepad Entries Guidelines** document.
- Contact the **Children's and Traded Service 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.

SIMS Permissions

Running the Return

- Returns Manager
- Returns Operator

Importing Fileset

- Systems Manager
- Returns Manager

Editing and Preparing Data

Users must also have permissions to access additional areas in SIMS e.g. Student details etc.

These are set by the System Manager.

SIMS Version

To run the return, you must have

SIMS 2025 Summer Release (7.224) or later installed.

To check which version of SIMS you have, select

Help | About SIMS. The version should read **7.224** or later.



Preparing School and Pupil Data

Check **School** and **Pupil Level** information is present and accurate in SIMS including:

- Updating school details (if applicable).
- New pupils/students have been added.
- Leavers recorded.
- SEN data.
- All exclusions are recorded.
- No missing or unexplained attendance marks.
- Free school meals entitlement recorded.
- Funding and monitoring data recorded.

SEN Data

The following SEN items are being collected:

SEN Status ie. E-EHCP, K-SEN Support, N-No SEN

Pupils with an **EHCP**, the needs type and ranking must match the coding information in the document reference number (found on the top of page 1).

Schools with a Designated SEN Unit or ARP

(not applicable to Special Schools or ARP)

- **Time in SEN Unit – Member of SEN Unit**
- **Resourced Provision**

Exclusion Information

Exclusions information is required for any pupil/ student (On roll & Leavers) subject to any exclusion:

Suspensions (excluding lunchtime suspensions)
during the period **01/01/2025 to 31/07/2025**

Permanent Exclusions (if a final Governor Review exists)
From **01/01/2025 to 01/10/2025**

Exclusions should not be counted if they were cancelled by the Head Teacher, or if the student was reinstated by the Discipline Committee or an Independent Appeal Panel.

Run the Census “Dry Run”

- Once upgraded to **v7.224**, create and run the census in order to identify any **errors** and **queries**.
- SIMS will check the data held in SIMS against the DfE validation requirements.
- The **validation errors summary** details the errors and queries that do not meet DfE requirements.
- **Errors** (in red) = missing or inaccurate data.
- **Queries** = data is unusual or not as expected. This does not always mean it is wrong.
- Use the **Detail Reports** to check the data.
- **Create and validate** as many times as necessary to clear the errors/queries.
- **Note :- Academies** should send a copy of their xml or UNA files via **AnyComms** only.

Checking & Editing Pupil Level Information

Statutory Return Tools

Pupil information can be updated at any time via:

Tools | Statutory Return Tools and selecting:

- Update **Class Type**
- Update **Early Years**
- Update **Top-up Funding**
- Update **Post Looked After Arrangements**
- Update **Funding and Monitoring**

Once working within the census panels, select **Update** will update the panels with the relevant information.

Top-up Funding

- Pupils should only be recorded as receiving top-up funding if they meet the following criteria:
- **Primary, Secondary Schools and Academies** – pupil receives more than £6,000 (or 13.5 hours) of funding (not including school budget share). Or has applied for High Needs Block Funding
- **Special, PRU and ARP** – pupils receives more than £10,000 (or 13.5 hours) extra funding (not including school budget share).

This information is provided to schools on the SSA List (usually issued in April and October).

Refer to the School Bursar, SENCo or SEN Team for further information.

Post Looked After Arrangements

Only record a pupil in **PLAA** if:

- Adoption from England and Wales
- Adoption from state care outside of England and Wales
- Special guardianship order (SGO) from England and Wales
- Residence order (RO) from England and Wales
- Child arrangement order (CAO) from England and Wales.
- Tick to confirm evidence obtained.
- Ensure necessary documentation is stored securely outside of SIMS or within the Document Management Server.

Funding and Monitoring

- Not applicable to Nursery Schools.
- Only record pupils for 2025/2026 academic year where:
 - Tutoring is funded by the school for Y1 – Y14
 - Post 16 pupils repeating up to one year of 16-19 funded provision.
- Information can be checked by running the **Funding and Monitoring detail report**.
- Any F&M details previously recorded via **Tools | Statutory Return Tools | Update Funding and Monitoring**, is displayed in the **Funding and Monitoring** panel.

School Dinners Taken (UIFSM)

- Applicable to pupils in **Reception, Year 1** and **Year 2** only.
- The **reference date** within the panel is provided so schools can report school dinners taken on an alternative date to census day. eg. if school was closed due to flooding, the date can be changed to reflect the situation.
- An alternative reference date must be within the Autumn term date range.

LIVE DEMONSTRATION

- Producing the Autumn 2025 Census return
- Completing the Census return.
- Producing Detail Reports.
- Producing Summary Report.
- Authorising the Census return.
- Locating file for Upload to Collect.