Schools' IT Newsletter

December 2024

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The holiday season is fast approaching, and SCC's IT Department would like to wish all our colleagues a very Merry Christmas.

We would also like to thank you for your continued custom and we hope that you enjoy a very Happy New Year.

Please note that our IT Service Desk will be open as usual with the exception of 24th, 27th and 31st December when the opening hours will be from 8.30am to 4.00pm

Arbor FAQ's for LA MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

Our schools will all be moving to the Arbor Perform package, details of what is included can be found below.

Core	Comms	Perform
Everything you need to replace your legacy MIS	Engage with parents and your wider community	Join up people, processes and policies across your school
Book a demo	Book a demo	Book a demo
Our best-of-breed basics:	**Everything in Core, plus:**	**Everything in Core and Comms, plus:**
✓ Attendance	✓ Parent Portal	✓ Payments Plus
✓ Behaviour	✓ Arbor Parent App	✓ Staff Performance
✓ Progress Tracking	✓ Payments for clubs, meals and trips	✓ My Classroom
✓ Census and Statutory Reporting	✓ Meal Management	✓ Intervention Tracking
✓ Student and Staff Profiles	✓ Parents Evening Booking	✓ Formative Assessments
✓ Emails	✓ Student Portal	
✓ Clubs and Trips Management	✓ Custom Report Cards	
✓ Staff Cover Management	✓ Custom Behaviour Workflows	
✓ Custom Report Writer		
✓ Student Report Cards		
✓ Send SMS		

What are the benefits of moving to Arbor?

Below are just some of the benefits of moving to Arbor.

- *Cloud-based product, enabling users to login from anywhere.*
- *Remove the need to maintain and run a dedicated on-premises server to host the MIS.*
- *Staff, in roles such as School Business Manager, can save up to 1.5 hours per week. Less time spent on busy admin across school gives staff more time to focus on student outcomes.*
- *Arbor's recent "Return On Investment" report highlights that schools can typically consolidate two third-party systems because of moving to Arbor. Saving money on third-party licencing and support costs.*

What training will I receive?

As part of the on-boarding process schools will receive access to the Arbor Foundation Training, more information can be found at *When should I complete my onboarding training - Primary Onboarding – Arbor Help Centre*

If you will be using school meals, clubs and trips, the details on the help centre is quite useful and may give you enough information before moving to Arbor, see

Payments, School Shop, Meals, Clubs and Trips – Arbor Help Centre,
Setting up Meals – Arbor Help Centre
Setting up Payments – Arbor Help Centre
Getting started with the Parent Portal and App – Arbor Help Centre

However, there is additional training that schools can purchase directly from Arbor if required, details can be found at Arbor Foundations: Meals Setup and Management – Arbor Help Centre

How do I access the Arbor help centre?
You will receive links directly from Arbor as part of the onboarding process. However, if you are unable to locate this information you can access the help centre via the following link Arbor Help Centre

What are the costs for SMS messaging?
If you wish to buy SMS bundles, this can be done directly via Arbor, by contacting customersales@arbor-education.com
Please see link below to the article which gives you an indication of the cost for SMS bundles under the FAQ's.
How to top up SMS credits to send texts – Arbor Help Centre

Are there any reports we should pull from SIMS to ensure that the correct data has migrated across to Arbor?
We would recommend pulling the following reports from SIMS so you can easily check your data post migration.
- *Reports > School Report*
- *Reports > Staff > Contract Information*
- *Reports > Student List > General Student List*

You can also refer to past detailed reports produced from census returns, these can be found within the folder on your machine that your census return is saved in. If you require any assistance locating these reports, please contact the support team.

What do I do if there is an issue with the migration?
Please contact the support team at Suffolk County Council by calling 01473 265555 or emailing itservicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk
If we are unable to fix these for you, we will work directly with the supplier to get these resolved.

Am I able to use SIMS post migration?
Once migrated to Arbor, your SIMS system can be used as a read-only tool until 31st March 2025. Please do not make any updates on the SIMS, as these will not be reflected on your new Arbor system.

If you have any questions or queries throughout this project, please do not hesitate to contact the support team via the IT Service Desk on 01473 265555 or itservicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk

SIMS and FMS 2024 AUTUMN RELEASE

We are pleased to inform you that the Autumn 2024 upgrade for SIMS. net and FMS will be released on **25/11/2024.** This will be downloaded and applied via SOLUS3.

Please be aware that if your SOLUS3 is set to apply the release automatically, SIMS, FMS and Discover will upgrade at 18:00 on **25/11/2024**. Please make sure as many SIMS and FMS workstations are left on to be upgraded overnight.

SIMS and FMS release notes
Please find the SIMS and FMS release notes that include details of any new features:

SIMS
http://sims.eadidom.com/Downloads/Documentation/SIMS_Combined_Autumn_2024.pdf

FMS
http://sims.eadidom.com/Downloads/Documentation/FMS_Autumn_2024.pdf

This will upgrade SIMS. net to version 7.220 and FMS to 6.220.

Please be aware they are **no** new base lookups in the release.

Guidance on how to upgrade your system can be found:
http://sims.eadidom.com/Downloads/Documentation/Deploying_an_Update_or_Patch.pdf

Patch 30288 – Consolidated Database Patch 1
This patch needs to be applied after the SIMS and FMS 2024 Autumn release. This fixes an issue in the Minutes Late Report in Attendance / Lesson Monitor where it incorrectly indicates the minutes late as zero rather than the minutes late that has been recorded.

Enhanced SIMS schools
We will be contact any school who buy into Enhanced SIMS to discuss the release. This will be scheduled in SOLUS3 to be applied out of school hours or be carried out by a member of the SIMS support team during school hours.

Remote Support Academies
We will be contact any academy who buy into Remote Support to discuss the release. This will be scheduled in SOLUS3 to be applied out of school hours or be carried out by a member of the SIMS support team during school hours.

If you have any questions or problems with your upgrade, please contact the IT Helpdesk on 01473 265555 or email ithelpdesk@suffolk.gov.uk

HOW TO RECORD A CHRISTMAS MEAL IN SIMS.NET DINNER MONEY

There are 2 steps to this process.
1. Create a Meal Type
2. Create a Meal Definition

Creating a Meal Type:

1. Select **Tools | Lookups | Maintain** to display the **Find Lookup Type** dialog.

2. Select **Dinner Money** from the **Data Area** drop-down list and click the **Search** button.

3. Highlight **Student Meal Type** and click the **Open** button to display the **Lookup Type Details** page.

The **Basic Details** panel is read-only.

4. Click the **New** button to add a value in Panel 2.
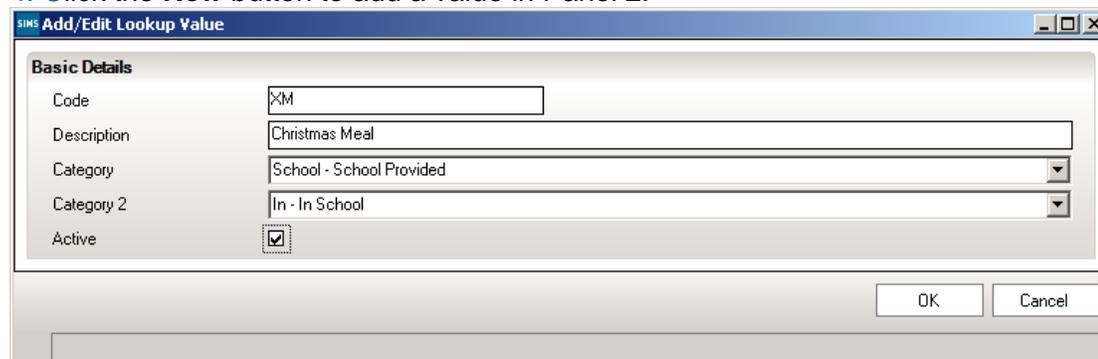
5. Add the **Code** (this is what you will see in the drop down when recording meals) and **Description**, as required.

6. Add **Category** and **Category 2**

  a. Indicate who provides the meal by selecting from the **Category** dropdown list, e.g. **School – School Provided**.

  b. Make a selection from the **Category 2** drop-down list to indicate whether the meal is taken in or out of school.

7. To make a code active, select the **Active** check box. The value is only made available for use if this check box is selected. You may want to come back after Christmas and take the tick out until next Autumn.

8. Click the **OK** button to return to the main **Lookup Type Details** page and click the **Save** button to save your changes.

NOTE: Changes take effect only when all users, including yourself, reopen SIMS.

Creating a Meal Definition:

Before using the Christmas Meal, you must define the meal charges.
You can also specify the date ranges during which the charges will apply.
It is not necessary to add an end date unless the meal charge is for a fixed period.

NOTE: A change in meal charge cannot be back-dated if the meal type has already been used to record a meal.

1. Select **Tools | Dinner Money | Pupil Meal Definitions** to display the **Find Pupil Meal Definition** browser.

2. Click the **New** button to display the **Pupil Meal Definition Detail** page.
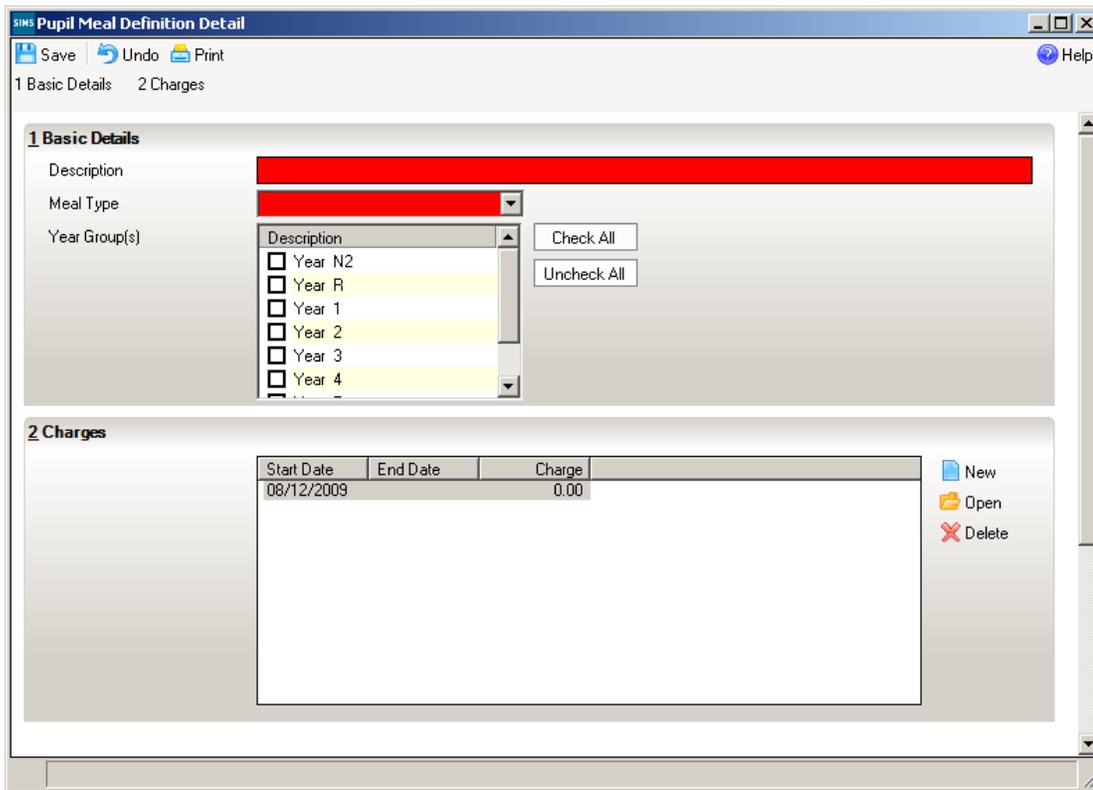
3. In the **Basic Details** panel, enter the **Description** for the meal, e.g. Christmas Meal

4. Select the **Meal Type** from the drop-down list, e.g. School Meal.

5. Select the **Year Group(s)/Tier(s)/Classes** that the meal definition is appropriate for by selecting the appropriate check box(es). Alternatively, the **Check All** and **Uncheck All** buttons can be used to multi-select and deselect the check boxes.
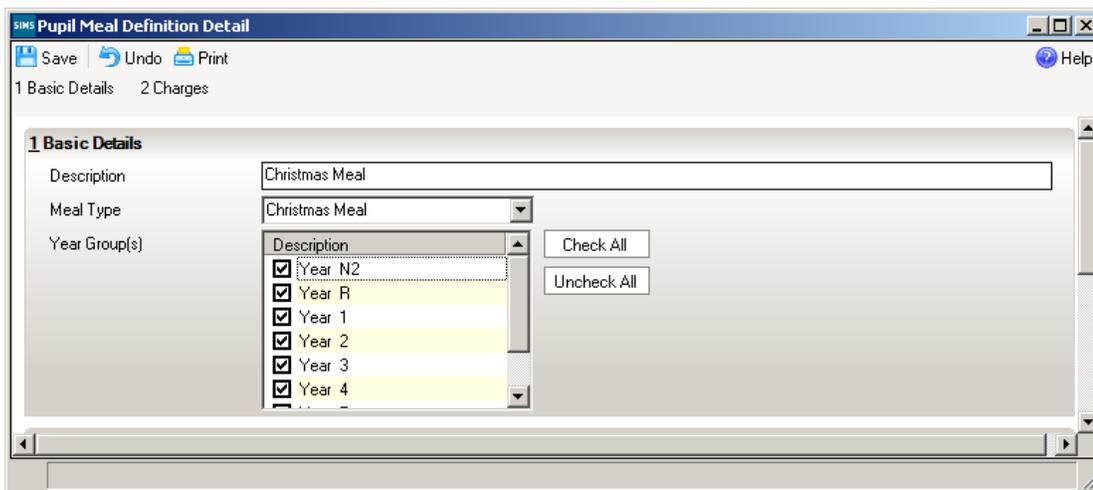
6. In the **Charges** panel, click the **New** button to add a new charge. The start and end dates define the dates between which the charge applies. Both dates must fall in the current academic year although the **End Date** can be left open.
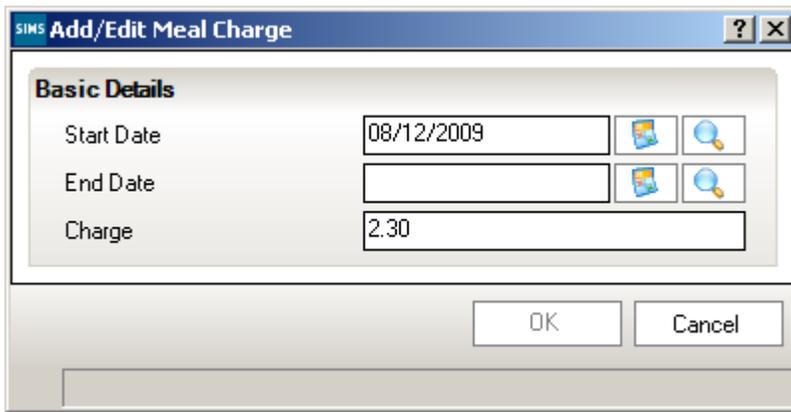
7. Enter the **Charge** for the meal type.
8. Click the **OK** button to return to the **Charges** panel and the **Save** button to save the changes.

If a charge has not been used for meal payments, it can be deleted by highlighting it and clicking the **Delete** button.

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT CENSUS

You may have read the release notes for the Autumn upgrade that brings Sims .Net to version 7.220; a link to this can be obtained from the Useful Information section.

The Spring census is due on the 16th of January 2025. Please ensure that you prep for this and perform a dry run before census date to remedy as many queries and errors as possible. Prep documentation can be obtained from the ESS statutory returns link in Useful Information section.

School Census Spring 2025 Key Dates

Census day 16/01/2025
- Attendance collected from 02/09/2024 to 31/12/2024
- Exclusions collected from 01/04/2024 to 31/12/2024
- Alternative Provision Placements collected from 03/10/2024 to 16/01/2025
- Free School Meal Eligibility collected from 04/10/2024 to 16/01/2025

First Time Reporting New Attendance Codes
Please be aware that this is the first time reporting of the new attendance codes which the schools should have been using since 02/09/2024.

For a list of changes, please click on this link - ESS Spring Census 2025

Filesets
As and when filesets become available, we will endeavour to release these via Anycomms as soon as feasible possible. Notifications will be sent to the mailbox we have on record for the school, please ensure that someone checks this mailbox for updates. As of 02/12/2024, ESS are working on fileset 2901, no target date has been set yet for release.

DFE Site
Please ensure that you can login to the DFE collect site as you may find that there is a significant delay in DFE response on census week.
Census Line Open Times (13th to 17th January) Monday to Thursday 0830hrs to 1700hrs, Friday 0830hrs to 1200hrs

Useful Information:
- DfE School Census Dates
- DfE Class Information
- ESS News Hub England
- ESS Fileset Series 2900
- ESS Statutory Returns

SMOOTHWALL WEB FILTERING SERVICES

The Smoothwall filtering service is designed to facilitate the effective provisioning of safeguarding in a school environment and meets legal mandates set out under the Prevent Duty and Keeping Children Safe Online.

While centrally managed and updated, the service also enables schools to block sites that they deem inappropriate using age and user groups. Schools can then generate activity reports from their Smoothwall portal. The solution defines and applies filtering policies to the following user groups:

- Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 students

- Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students

- Key Stage 5 and Post 16 students

- Teaching staff

- Office administration staff

The Smoothwall filtering solution offers two methods to configure devices for Internet access. The first is by configuring implicit proxy server and port settings on each device, and the other is by installing the Smoothwall IDEX client.

The Smoothwall IDEX client as an optional solution for Windows computers running in a Microsoft Windows domain environment. The IDEX client forwards usernames, group membership, and information about web requests to the Smoothwall solution for web filtering purposes. Each web request is individually identified; therefore, it can identify multiple users logged in at the same workstation. Local user accounts are identified by the workstation, as well as users behind a Network Address Translation (NAT) connection.

Please note that the IDEX Client is free of charge and for those schools & academies that currently purchase the Smoothwall service from Suffolk County Council and have not yet installed the IDEX Agent please see the attached instructions below on how to configure your devices

If you require any assistance please raise a call with the IT Services either by email at ITServicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk or by telephone on 01473 265555.

You can also find details of this service on our website IT services for schools and academies - Suffolk County Council.

CONTACT THE IT SERVICE DESK!

Please note that the Schools IT Services mailbox is for sales enquiries and is only monitored periodically. Therefore, if you have a query with regards to a new service, please send an email to schoolsitservices@suffolk.gov.uk.

All standard incidents and service requests **must** be raised via the IT Service Desk on 01473 265555 or via itservicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk otherwise this will result in any responses being delayed.

Our offices are open from 8.30am to 5pm Monday - Friday