

Schools' IT Newsletter

JULY 2024

Included in this month's issue:

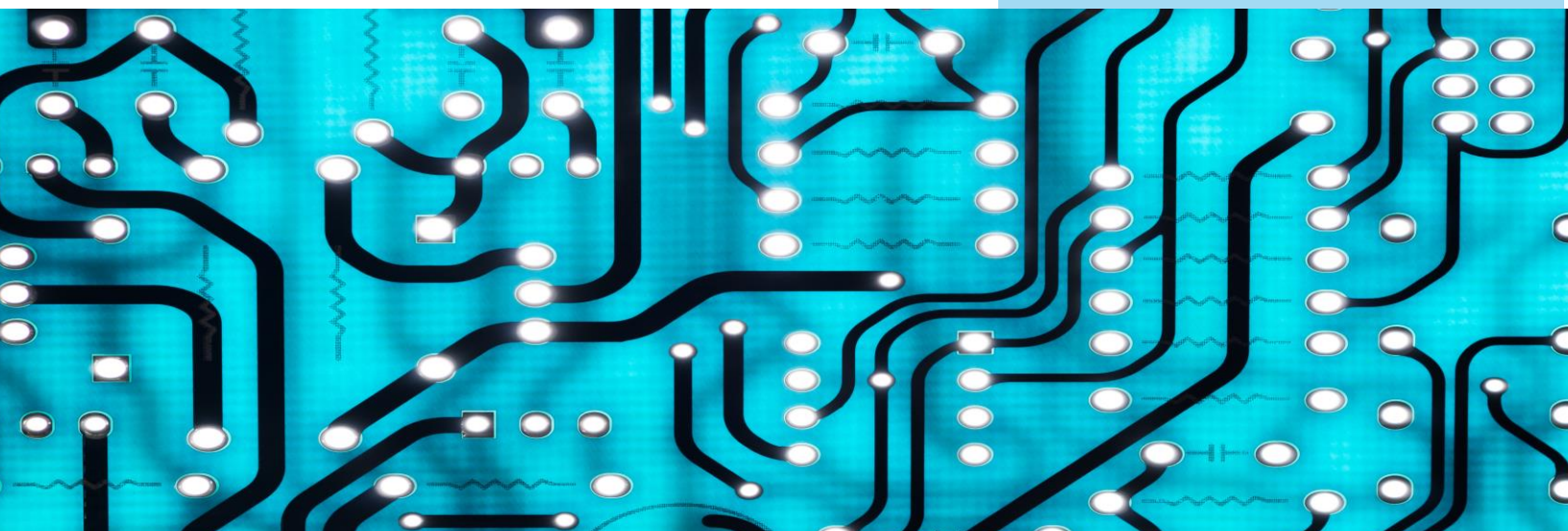
- **Important Changes to Attendance Codes (do not ignore)**
- **Housekeeping – previous newsletters**
- **Key Dates for the School Diary**
- **Autumn Census training**
- **End of year Procedure**
- **New all-inclusive education offer from Redstor**
- **Contact Details**

Academies IT Statements for 2024 to 2025

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those academies who have already returned the signed statements and to remind those that have not done so that the deadline is Friday 23rd August 2024.

If you are not intending to work after the schools finish for the summer holiday, we would appreciate it if the statements could be returned by Friday 19th July.

Thank you for your continued custom and we hope you have an enjoyable holiday.



Important Changes to Attendance Codes

Do Not Ignore!!!

FAO ADMIN STAFF/HEADTEACHERS/TECHNICAL STAFF

Attendance codes are changing from the 1 August 2024 so this will come into effect for the new academic year 2024/2025 for most schools in Suffolk.

At present this is the list of codes that a school will use until then:

Codes	SIMS Description	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (not dual registration).	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances.	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration	Dual registered (at another establishment) - not counted in possible attendances.	Attendance not required
E	Excluded	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made.	Authorised absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday.	Unauthorised absence
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.	Authorised absence
I	Illness	Unable to attend because of sickness	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendance.	Approved educational activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late (before registers closed) marked as present	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised abs	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description.	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity.	Approved educational activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence due to religious observance.	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence due to study leave.	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence due to traveller absence.	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed.	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip.	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience.	Approved educational activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances.	Attendance not required
Y	Unable to attend due to due to exceptional circumstances	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances.	Attendance not required
Z	Pupil not on roll	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.	Attendance not required
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Planned whole or partial school closure - not counted in possible attendances.	Attendance not required

This is a list of attendance codes that come into effect in the next academic year for all schools:

Codes	SIMS Description	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present at the school morning session.	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present at the school afternoon session.	Present
B	Attending any other Approved Educational Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity.	Approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance.	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence - regulated performance or employment abroad	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence - Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration	Dual registered at another school.	Attendance not required
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision	Authorised absence
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Holiday not granted by the school.	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment).	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence - Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
K	Attending alternative provision arranged by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved educational activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register is closed.	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason for absence not yet established.	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.	Unauthorised absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Participating in a sporting activity.	Approved educational activity
Q	Unable to attend - lack of access arrangement.	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.	Attendance not required
R	Religious observance	Religious observance.	Authorised absence
S	Study leave for public examination	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public	Authorised absence
T	Travelling with parent for occupational purposes	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Arrived in school after registration closed.	Unauthorised absence
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Attending work experience	Attending work experience	Approved educational activity
X	Not required to attend - non-compulsory school age pupil	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Attendance not required
Y1	Unable to attend - normal transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	Attendance not required
Y2	Unable to attend - widespread travel disruption	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.	Attendance not required
Y3	Unable to attend - Unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.	Attendance not required
Y4	Unable to attend - Unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly	Attendance not required
Y5	Unable to attend - criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.	Attendance not required
Y6	Unable to attend - Public health Guidance/Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.	Attendance not required
Y7	Unable to attend - Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.	Attendance not required
Z	Pupil not on roll	Prospective pupil not on admission register.	Attendance not required
#	Planned whole school closure	Planned whole school closure.	Attendance not required

Some Codes have been retired and will no longer be available to use in the next academic year: _

Codes	SIMS Description	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
H	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday.	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendance.	Approved educational activity
Y	Unable to attend due to due to exceptional circumstances	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances.	Attendance not required

This is a list of the new codes that come into effect in the next academic year:

Codes	SIMS Description	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
C1	Leave of absence - regulated performance or employment abroad	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence - Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence - Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
K	Attending alternative provision arranged by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved educational activity
Q	Unable to attend - lack of access arrangement.	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access	Attendance not required
Y1	Unable to attend - normal transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	Attendance not required
Y2	Unable to attend - Widespread travel emergency	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.	Attendance not required
Y3	Unable to attend - Unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.	Attendance not required
Y4	Unable to attend - Unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly	Attendance not required
Y5	Unable to attend - criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.	Attendance not required
Y6	Unable to attend - Public health Guidance/Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.	Attendance not required
Y7	Unable to attend - Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.	Attendance not required

This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code:

Cod	SIMS Description	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
B	Attending any other Approved Educational Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity	Approved educational activity
K	Attending alternative provision arranged by the LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved educational activity
Y7	Unable to attend - Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.	Attendance not required


To put in a reason, you would have to first put in the code, then come back to the code and right click on it to add a reason. A reason is not a note, when a reason has been given, it will be a different colour marker to a note and will be in a different corner of the attendance mark.

These changes have come down from Westminster, the DfE have advised the various MIS companies of these changes and when they come into effect.

Please be aware that some attendance codes will have two characters. For instance, "unable to attend" has seven variants, of which Y7 would require a reason.

Obviously, this is going to change the errors and solutions for the next census. We are unable to provide a definitive list now for the Autumn census. However, as these codes come into effect a month before the first census of that academic year it would be a good idea to ensure that the correct code is used. If a reason is required, it would be better to provide this reason rather than work this all out on census day.

The changes to sims software to enable this change in attendance codes will be provided by the summer upgrade. This upgrade normally becomes available at the end of June.



If a school fails to upgrade before the academic year 2024/2025 start, then they will be unable to provide the correct code in some instances. In the past, some schools have left the upgrades until the week before census week and in some instances have left it until census week. I would strongly recommend that all schools get their upgrade completed before the end of this academic year. At the very latest, to get the upgrade completed during the summer break.

Failure to upgrade means that the attendance codes could be incorrect/invalid, which would lead to redoing attendance for the entire school where codes have been retired and codes have broken up to two-digit codes. Furthermore, some codes like the B code will require a reason which cannot be provided if sims were not upgraded.

Additionally, any attendance marks should not be added in advance. Attendance should only be taken in this instance once the upgrade has been successful, and the academic year has started. This is due to the retiring of some codes and new codes being implemented on the start of the academic year. For instance, if you were going to add a H code for family holiday agreed, this code is being retired so would be invalid in September. There is no replacement for this code, this could leave the school in a position where there are only poor choices to put as an alternative.

The Autumn census is the most important census, as this is the one where the school generates the most funding from. I therefore expect a lot of traffic on census helpline during census week regarding the attendance changes. Your patience and understanding during that week would be greatly appreciated.

If you require further information or assistance, please log a call with the IT Service Desk by phone on 01473 265555 or by email to ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk



HOUSEKEEPING – PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS

FAO ADMIN STAFF/HEADS/TECHNICAL STAFF

Some schools have asked for previous newsletters which contained housekeeping for data tidying of the sims database and files associated with schools.

You can find these using the following link:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/it-services-for-schools-and-academies>

At the bottom of the page is a box called “IT Services Newsletter”, this is where all previous editions of the newsletter can be accessed.

- January 2024 – Deleting Unwanted Persons/Contacts/Admissions Applications.
- February 2024 – Bulk deleting of students/files.
- June 2024 – Deleting staff data/files.



KEY DATES FOR THE SCHOOL DIARY

FAO ADMIN STAFF/HEADS/TECHNICAL STAFF

Schools have previously indicated that they were unaware when the key census dates are. Please see below the census dates for 2024 to 2025.

Autumn census:

- Census date – Thursday 3 October 2024.
- Requires the Summer upgrade to be produced.

Workforce Census:

- Census date - Thursday 7 November 2024.
- Requires the Summer upgrade to be produced.

Spring census:

- Census date – Thursday 16 January 2025
- Requires the Autumn upgrade to be produced.

Summer census:

- Census date – Thursday 15 May 2025.
- Requires the Spring upgrade to be produced.

ESS also provides a year planner called Yearbooks; this can be accessed by clicking on the “Documentation” link in the top right-hand corner of the home page in sims. If you have closed the home page, this can be accessed by going to Focus>Home Page.

Yearbooks are colour coded, red for English, white for all schools etc.

This way you can see what is relevant to your school and plan month by month.

Please add the census dates to your school diary so that it will act as a reminder. Each census comes with an upgrade that is released the month prior and a filesset that is released the week prior to census week. The exception to the upgrade is the workforce census which can be produced after the summer upgrade.



AUTUMN CENSUS TRAINING

FAO ADMIN STAFF/HEADS/TECHNICAL STAFF

Please see below training dates for the Autumn Census on 3rd October 2024

Training will be from 9.30am to 12.00pm on:

- 17th September – Primary
- 19th September – Secondary

Training will take place via teams.

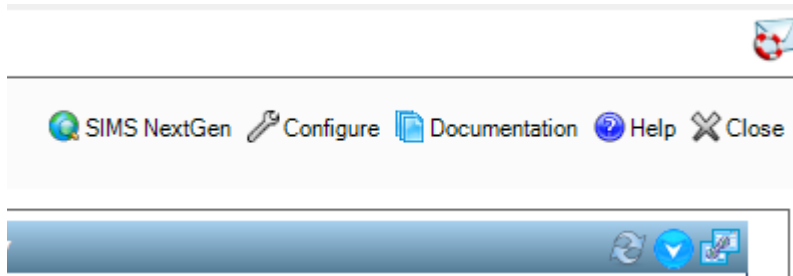
This will cover the changes in the Autumn census.

To book a place on the training, please either log a call through the IT Service Desk by telephone on 01473 265555 or by email at ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk or email Catherine Hudson at catherine.hudson@suffolk.gov.uk.

END OF YEAR PROCEDURE

FAO ADMIN STAFF/HEADS/TECHNICAL STAFF

The end of year documents can be obtained from the documentation link in sims.



If you do not have the home page open, it can be obtained by going to Focus>Home Page.

Clicking on the link takes you to a webpage with options for documentation. One of those options is the end of year procedures.

End-of-Year Procedures

- Primary Summary
- Primary Detailed
- Secondary Summary
- Secondary Detailed
- Independent Junior/Preparatory
- Independent Senior

Yearbooks

Summary is an abridged version that is just the bullet points and simple instruction set. The detailed version is the verbose version with a more complete instruction set.

In essence, the order of processing is:

- Teacher contracts/staff details (you need the correct staff to assign later)
- Academic year setup for 24/25.
- Admission files import.
- Pastoral structure for the new academic year (where you assign teachers to classrooms)
- promotions and leavers

If you require further information or assistance, please log a call with the IT Service Desk by phone on 01473 265555 or by email to ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk

NEW ALL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OFFER



Data protection and cyber resilience is an important part of any digital strategy today and the council is committed to providing the best-in-class solutions to our schools.

IT landscapes are changing with the adoption of Microsoft 365 (M365) and Google Workspace (GWS) with many more cyber risks that could affect a school.

Together with our data management technology partner, Redstor, we are pleased to propose a new all-inclusive Education offer, which includes:

- Use of any products (Servers, M365, GWS, SIMS etc).
- Unlimited Capacity and Users
- Unlimited data retention
- AI Malware Detection

This will enable schools to:

- Protect ALL data, capturing critical data by default.
- Cover data in any environment.
- Meet compliancy regulations and guidelines from the RPA/DfE/NCSC.

Join us for a webinar on Tuesday 16th July 2024 between 10am and 12pm (exact time to be confirmed) to find out more!

If you wish to book a place on the webinar, please either log a call through the IT Service Desk by telephone on 01473 265555 or by email at ITServiceDesk@suffolk.gov.uk or by sending an email to Mo.Mundy@suffolk.gov.uk

CONTACTING 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

