Suffolk County Council

Schools' IT Newsletter

Included in this month's issue:

Date to remember:

The October Schools' Census is due on 7th October 2021.

Please see the article below for full details.

School Census October 2021

The October 2021 Census is due on 7th October 2021

The expectation is that the census file will be uploaded and submitted on the government COLLECT website within a week to allow checks and amendments to be made ensuring that school funding is not reduced by enrolment status clashes.

We will be opening a Census Helpline during Census week, but welcome enquiries prior to that logged in the normal way through the IT Service Desk on 01473 265555 ITServiceDesk@Suffolk.Gov.UK

The SIMS Census Helpline

01473 260666

Open 4th October 2021 – 8th October 2021

8.30 – 17.00 Monday – Thursday and 8.30 – 16.30 Friday

Due to operational requirements, there will be fewer members of staff operating the helpline Wednesday 6th October AM we apologise if this causes any delay in obtaining assistance.

Please click HERE to find SIMS FAQs including those relevant to the School Census.

Please note, if you are an Academy who does not purchase our support, you will need to contact your own MIS support team regarding the School Census.

Should you have any queries regarding this article please contact the IT Service Desk on 01473 265555 ITServiceDesk@Suffolk.Gov.UK

census 2021

Schools' Workforce Census Update

Outcomes: To be able to prepare your data to enable you to run the School Workforce Census as required by the Department for Education.

Event Description: This will now be an online training course due to Covid. Update for Schools on changes to the School Workforce Census. This will be done as a briefing session. People new to the school census will have the opportunity to run through the school census with the help of one of the SIMS Support Team.

This event is free to LA Schools and Academies who purchase remote SIMS Support. Contact service.bridge@suffolk.co.uk if you are not an LA school or an academy who purchases remote SIMS Support for a quote.

Code SCIT /SWFCU21 Date Mon 18 October 2021 Venue Webinar n/a Time 13:00 - 15:30 Visit www.suffolkcpd.co.uk Target Audience Business Support teams within schools who have the responsibility of completing this return.

For further information please contact Catherine.Hudson@suffolk.gov.uk

SIMS7 and FMS Product Surveys

For anyone using SIMS.net or FMS within their school or academy

The Product Satisfaction Surveys are your direct opportunity to feedback to the product team on your experiences and views of the software itself. The questionnaires will give you the chance to detail your thoughts on the modules, rate the user experience and evaluate the latest additions. The data collected in this survey will be used to better understand user needs and assist in prioritising items with the biggest impact in future releases.

SIMS7 Satisfaction Survey
FMS Satisfaction Survey

The surveys enable both schools and those supporting SIMS or FMS to provide feedback. Your support and feedback is incredibly valuable to help us develop solutions that meet our users' needs.

New Suffolk Schools' Bronze Cyber Security Service

For School Leaders and IT Managers

We will shortly be launching the first of our new cyber security services for Suffolk Schools. This new service will be provided at no cost for the first 12 months for all schools who purchase a broadband service from Suffolk County Council.

The new service has four security and information management features, which we have grouped together to help protect schools and educate staff. The services included are:

- NCSC CiSP - Cyber advice and forum sign up referral
- NCSC - Early Warning System reports, Webcheck & Mailcheck
- Weekly Cyber News, including latest threats and vulnerabilities
- Information Management training

You can find full details of this service on the Suffolk County Council website at:
https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/it-services-for-schools-and-academies/suffolk-schools-bronze-cyber-security-service/.

To fully participate in this service, we will ask schools to provide contact details and some information about their email and website setup. Over the next few weeks, we will be directly contacting all eligible schools requesting this information.

As well as launching this service we have been working with colleagues in the Children's Services Education team to see how we can better support schools and share information and lessons learned. We know that in recent times there have been at least three major attacks on Suffolk schools (Ransomware and Distributed Denial of Service -DDoS) which have caused significant disruption to the education of students and the general running of the school.

Where these incidents happen, there is an opportunity to share details of the experience and lessons learned. With this in mind, we are launching a cyber-security survey. The aim of the survey is to collect and then share knowledge, experiences and lessons learnt, between all schools in Suffolk.

Please take some time to complete the survey which is available at: SCC IT - Suffolk schools Cyber Security Survey

If you have any questions about the new service or the cyber security survey, then please contact us at schoolscyber@suffolk.gov.uk.

Schools' Broadband – Standard Fibre Service Description Error

For Schools with a standard gigabit broadband connection

We have been reviewing the documentation that we have issued to schools for the Standard Gigabit broadband service and need to apologise for some errors in the document. The service description we have issued has a couple of key errors around contention and download speeds that are in part due to the document not keeping pace with the technology developments and delivery under the Suffolk Cloud project. In delivering the new Suffolk Cloud WAN we wanted to create a premium product that would deliver uncongested network connectivity to schools and other public sector sites regardless of the time of day.

As a result, there is now little contention on the new public sector network delivered and managed by MLL Telecom in Suffolk. This means that a 100Mbs circuit should always operate very close to that speed. We believe this to be a significant benefit to all schools as you can rely on the performance of the circuit when you need it and not see degraded performance when other schools and public sector partners are heavily accessing the network. Previously a 1Gbs circuit at peak times could actually deliver speeds as low as 50Mbs, in addition where we deliver full fibre circuits these circuits operate at the same speed in both directions, unlike many other products.

Suffolk Cloud is a fully managed service where we monitor and review the performance of circuits with MLL Telecom (our telecoms partner) to ensure it delivers the performance that schools need. We believe that 100Mb is the best option for most primary schools as this will provide up to 100Mbs for downloads and uploads. We seek to ensure that the service continually keeps pace with ever increasing demands and are currently working on pricing for a 300Mb option, as we appreciate that an uncontended 1Gb up and down service will be too expensive for most primary schools. It is also likely to mean that schools will pay for bandwidth that they don't utilise.

It is important to note that bandwidth is only one important element of a broadband circuit. With FTTP circuits provided under Suffolk Cloud there are several other key features:

• Full fibre network with no legacy technology
• Fully managed public sector compliant service with a single point of contact for issues and requests
• Distributed denial of service (DDoS) protection to prevent cyber-attacks targeted at schools on the network
• Low latency connections, as the network has been designed and optimised to process very high volume of data messages with minimal delay, this means no waiting around for websites to load.
• In most case our 100Mb full fibre circuits are 1Gb capable and bandwidth can be increased without any onsite hardware changes.

We would again like to apologise for any confusion caused by the error in the service description.

Changes to Free School Meals Service

All Suffolk Academies/Free Schools

As you may be aware following the IT service's newsletter, with immediate effect, the Free School Meals service for academies and free schools will no longer operate as a traded through service with Schools' choice. Should you need to amend usernames and passwords to allow your school staff to access lists on the Free School Meals Portal, please contact the Free School Meals Team directly at freeschoolmeals@suffolk.gov.uk providing them with the details of the changes you wish to make. Over the coming weeks, the Free School Meals Team will send out the contacts held by Schools' choice for your school to ensure that these are still accurate. We thank you in advance for responding to this request for information.

The Free School Meals Portal is being upgraded as part of a wider Suffolk County Council project with the aim of improving the identity management aspect of it. We understand that some of our academies/free schools have encountered difficulty in accessing the portal and we hope that this work will significantly improve this issue when the project has been completed. In the meantime, please rest assured that the Free School Meals Team will continue sending you eligibility lists over secured email and answer any free school meal related enquiries you may have in the meantime.

SCHOOLS' EMAIL SERVICE

Please note that O365 mailboxes are still being requested via email and it is important that these are requested for new starters via our website using the following link **https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/it-services-for-schools-and-academies/request-a-school-mailbox-account/, t**his is so that all security checks can be carried out and to ensure that there is no delay in setting up new mailboxes. All sections must be completed, and you will notice that the School's 3 digit code is now a mandatory field. You must include the payroll number (if applicable for the member of staff), as your request will not be processed without it. The exceptions to this are Governors who do not require a payroll number and any agency staff that are not contracted to the school.

Once an email has been provisioned you must ensure that the initial password link is accessed as soon as possible after receipt of the notification, as these are time limited.

We would also like to emphasise the importance of letting us know about any members of staff that will be leaving their post in order that we can delete their mailbox in a timely manner and to ensure that the school is not charged for these mailboxes at renewal time. Please note that any requests for deletions must come from the person managing the email service within the school/academy. A new form is now available on our website and you can access this using the following link **https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/it-services-for-schools-and-academies/request-to-delete-an-o365-mailbox/**.

Please also note that the email service is no longer connected to staff members contracts and if you do not complete the online forms a mailbox will not be set up or deleted automatically.

HOW TO CONTACT US!

You should continue to raise all standard incidents and service requests via the IT Service Desk on 01473 265555 or via itservicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk, our offices are open 08:30-17:00, Monday-Friday.

We have set up a mailbox for non-standard queries, e.g. enquiring about a new service, please email us at Schoolsitservices@suffolk.gov.uk