School Census Pre-Census Top Tips

1	File Set	Contact your MIS Advisory Team prior to Census to ensure you are on the correct File set – the date should read Summer 2025 date 15th May 2025.
2	Collect Access	Ensure you can access COLLECT – if you have forgotten your password, contact the DfE immediately – there can be a 5-day delay on responses. DfE Sign-in (education.gov.uk).
3	Download acceptable Notepad entries	Schools need to provide explanatory information for individual queries as a Notepad on COLLECT. Please note this is the school's responsibility – they can be downloaded from the link below. **The query response must be in the DfE standard notepad format.** Complete the school census - Check your data - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
4	GIAS	Check your MIS database against Get Information About Schools. You need to ensure the **Governance** and **SEN Provisions** match.
5	Pupil registration status	Check your MIS system that each student has the correct enrolment status, if they are Dual reg you need to ensure both schools are correctly recording. Incorrect recording will display on the Duplicate reports on Collect. Enrolment status C – Single registered M – Main dual registration by one establishment. S – Subsidiary dual registration by the other establishment
6	Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions	Check your pupil/student suspension data for the period 01/08/2024-20/04/2025 to ensure all suspensions/exclusions have been recorded correctly.
7	SEND Status E	Check the SEN status of every pupil/student and amend where necessary. Remember – A pupil should only be recorded as Status E if they have a **signed** EHCP. Whilst the plan is being written, they need to stay at the original status.
8	Check for Temporary UPNS	The DfE will not accept Temporary UPNS on your Census return. You identify a temporary UPN if it has a letter at the End 860123423124B. If you have a temporary UPN, contact the previous school to ask for their permanent UPN – or the Schools Data Team to search on GIAP.
9	Legal names	You need to ensure that students are recorded as their full legal names. Entries such as 'Tom' or 'Lizzie' need to be checked and amended to 'Thomas' or 'Elizabeth' as appropriate.
10	FSM List	Download your Free School Meals list from Prime and check it against your database – this will ensure that you claim for every pupil/student who has an entitlement and do not claim for those who do not.