

Get Ready for Census – Summer 2026

School Census Day

Thursday 21 May 2026

9 Point Plan to prepare for the May 2026 School Census

The Summer school census is almost here, please use our newsletters over the next few weeks to support your school in the preparation for a smooth census period.

We recommend that your school prepares in advance for the school census, ensuring all data is up to date and you have access to all systems. The '**Get ready for census**' newsletter suggests useful preparation advice.

IMPORTANT SIMS NEXT GEN

ParentPay (SIMS) are encouraging schools to use **SIMS Next Gen** wherever possible to familiarise themselves with the new tools and processes. Where this is not possible, **SIMS 7** remains available. If, and only if, schools have the capacity to compare data in both systems, this can help build confidence and provide valuable feedback; however, this is entirely optional.

Entrust scheduled several SIMS Next Gen related School Summer Census webinars throughout April. Guidance for completing the Summer School Census in SIMS Next Gen can be found on the Entrust Support Portal (<http://support.entrust-ed.co.uk>) under Knowledgebase item **KB0011004**.

Schools who do not receive SIMS Support from Entrust should refer to the ParentPay knowledgebase instead (https://my.parentpaygroup.com/csm?id=csm_login).

1. Correct file set

... be in contact with your MIS supplier to ensure you have the most up to date file set imported into your system. The term should read Summer 2026 and the Census data should be 21/05/2026.

2. COLLECT Access

... check your access to COLLECT.

If your password has expired and you cannot successfully change it, or you have forgotten your username you should contact the DfE immediately to ensure that you can access the portal on Census Day to submit your School Census. There is a potential 5 working day turnaround for the DfE to respond to these requests and they will be extremely busy during census period.

[Access DfE services \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.education.gov.uk)

3. Download the Acceptable Notepads Entries

Schools are required to provide explanatory information for individual queries as a Notepad on COLLECT.

PLEASE NOTE: These need to be in the approved format as defined by the DfE and can be downloaded from the DfE website or the SLN.

Notepad entries that say "Yes" or "Correct" will NOT be accepted. They should read as "Confirmed as correct" or as defined by the above DfE standards.

4. Pupil/Student Registration (C/M/S)

... check every pupil/student in your MIS database and make sure their registration status is correct. If you have any dual registration pupils/students. Please ensure both schools are recording a supporting status, both schools must not record the same enrolment status. Please note that incorrect Enrolment status will show on the available Census reports and will not clear until this has been corrected, so it is important to record the students Enrolment Status correctly. Further guidance on the available reports will be available soon.

There will be further guidance on what to do for Dual Registered pupils/students in the Guidance Notes on [Staffordshire Learning Net](#).

5. Get Information About Schools

... check your MIS database against Get Information About Schools and

- ensure that the Governance in both places is the same – if they are not, find out the correct Governance for your school and amend the incorrect version, your Census will not be authorised by the DfE if this is incorrect or does not match.
- ensure that the Type of SEN provision matches your MIS database version, as your Census will not be authorised by DfE if the Type is incorrect or does not match.

6. 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.

7. SEND

.... 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. Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions

- Check your pupil/student suspension data for the period **01/08/2025 – 05/04/2026** to ensure all suspensions/exclusions have been recorded correctly.

9. And Finally...

.... check your MIS database to ensure that all pupils/students –

- have a permanent UPN – if not, the temporary UPN must be replaced either by contacting the previous school or contacting the Schools Data Team who may be able to assist you.
- Students are recorded by their full legal names – entries such as 'Tom' or 'Lizzie' need to be checked and amended to 'Thomas' or 'Elizabeth' as appropriate.
- have their correct full addresses recorded.
- have their correct date of birth recorded.
- have their correct gender recorded.
- Ethnicity and Language recorded.