SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

Version 7.222

SIMS

NOTE Please read these notes carefully before installing or upgrading your software. Do not attempt any installation or upgrade without first making a fully restorable backup of your SIMS system.

Census is moving to SIMS Next Gen

We've created a brand-new SIMS in the cloud: SIMS Next Gen

It's setting a new standard for simplicity, speed and productivity. Plus, it's packed with classroom essentials like Class View, and there's more to come every term. You just need to do five simple steps to access them.

This Summer will be the last term you'll do your Summer Census in SIMS 7. So, it's important that you get ahead now and make sure your school is ready to access the benefits of SIMS Next Gen.

So, future-proof your MIS and join the 94% of schools finding it 'easy' or 'super easy' to use. Plus 'it streamlines daily tasks' and allows for 'quicker and easier software upgrades' - Mark Simpson, ICT Network Manager, at Newport CE Primary School.

To get your school up and running, simply head over to our blog article and check out our latest toolkit.

Ideas Portal

Our ideas portal is the perfect place to raise any new ideas or enhancements to the existing functionality you may have. Take the opportunity to view, vote and promote ideas that you feel would make the most difference to your experience in SIMS.

You can access the Ideas portal via the support portal.

NOTE You must log in to the support portal to access the ideas portal.

Satisfaction Survey

The SIMS 7 Satisfaction Survey is your direct opportunity to feedback to the product team on your experiences and views of the software itself. The short questionnaire will give you a chance to detail your thoughts on the modules, rate the user experience and evaluate the latest additions. This can be completed anonymously should you wish.

You can access the satisfaction survey:

- SIMS 7: Tools | SIMS Satisfaction Survey
- Online: https://www.ess-sims.co.uk/user-survey
- Support Portal (You do not need to log in to the support portal to access the satisfaction survey.)

Contents

SIMS 7 Release Notes

Each functional area displays a set of icons indicating the school type(s) to which the content relates. Icons that indicate a link to the applicable handbook(s) and New Feature videos are also displayed.

EP	Content applicable to English Primary and Northern Ireland Primary schools
ES	Content applicable to English Secondary and Northern Ireland Secondary schools
WP	Content applicable to Welsh Primary schools
WS	Content applicable to Welsh Secondary schools
IN	Content applicable to independent schools
	Hyperlink to Support Article / Handbook

Announcements EP ES WP WS IN

Link to the latest 'What's New' information

Applicable to All schools

A new menu item 'What's New in SIMS' has been added to the Help button to access the latest Release Notes for SIMS at any time.

> **NOTE** The shortcut key for this menu route is 'W'

Attendance EP ES WP WS IN

Unauthorised Absence Alerts

Applicable to All schools

Schools can now configure up to three alerts for unauthorised absences using different thresholds. This is to aid schools in monitoring attendance more proactively.

A default setting has been introduced to inform reporting and Print Letter functionality. A default must always be set and a warning message will appear if no default is selected.

Enhancements to My Reminders on Homepage

Focus | Homepage | My Reminders

Alerts for Unauthorised Absences 1, 2, and 3 are displayed on the homepage where users can double-click on an alert to view its details. Additionally, the **No. of Unauthorised Absences Specified in Alerts report** is automatically launched with pre-set values. These values can be manually edited as needed in the report.

NOTE When running the "No. of Unauthorised Absences Specified in Alerts" report, default values will match those set in the alerts.

SIMS

Enhanced Attendance Reporting

Reports | Attendance | Whole Group Student Reports

Applicable to All schools

Exceptional Circumstances UI now shows column for Statutory Explanation. The Description column has also been increased in size to show maximum text and a tooltip is now available.

The "No. of Unauthorised Absences Specified in Alerts" report will default to values set in alerts but remains user-editable and the Reporting Dictionary now includes attendance reports aligned with the Absence alert settings.

NOTE The data item **Religion** has been changed to Religion/Faith as outlined in CBDS.

Assessment EP ES WP WS

Welsh Schools: Statutory Updates to Assessment Resources NEW

Phase: All phases using KS3 (Secondary and All Through/Special Schools)

NOTE We are still providing KS3 resources to Secondary and Special Schools although there is no longer a statutory requirement for them to provide data to WG.

This will update the KS3 template and wizard to make them non-statutory going forward and update the reports with the final national data from 2024. This update makes these resources available for schools who wish to use them in a non-statutory capacity.

This will be the final update to provide the latest national data and update the notes to state that it is now non-statutory.

This update provides access to non-statutory assessment resources for Welsh schools that want to use the last published Foundation Baseline, Foundation Outcome, KS2 and KS3 resources.

The following is a list of all the KS3 Welsh resources you will continue to have access to:

Filename	Template Name	Ind Report Name
Key Stage 3 Wizard Wales 2025 Cy.XML	CA3 AB.Pynciau Craidd Cymraig 2il 2025 CA3 E. AA IMT Cymru 2025 CA3 G. AA Sylfaen Cymru 2025 CA3 L. Argrafflen (Adolygiad) Cymru 2025	KS3 P1 Student 2025 Cymru KS3 P1 Student 2025 Wales KS3 P2 School 2025 Cymru KS3 P2 School 2025 Wales
Key Stage 3 Wizard Wales 2025 En.XML	KS3 AB. Core and Welsh 2nd TA 2025 KS3 E. MFL TA Wales 2025 KS3 G. Non-Core TA Wales 2025 KS3 L. Broadsheet Wales 2025	KS3 P1 Student 2025 Cymru KS3 P1 Student 2025 Wales KS3 P2 School 2025 Cymru KS3 P2 School 2025 Wales
Key Stage 3 Templates 2025 Cy.xml	CA3 AB.Pynciau Craidd Cymraig 2il 2025 CA3 E. AA IMT Cymru 2025 CA3 G. AA Sylfaen Cymru 2025 CA3 L. Argrafflen (Adolygiad) Cymru 2025	
Key Stage 3 Templates 2025 En.xml	KS3 AB. Core and Welsh 2nd TA 2025 KS3 E. MFL TA Wales 2025 KS3 G. Non-Core TA Wales 2025 KS3 L. Broadsheet Wales 2025	

SIMS

Apart from rolling forward the dates and updating national data in reports, everything else remains the same as last year.

Welsh Schools: statutory Assessment updates to Import / Export routines

Phase: All phases using KS3 (Secondary and All Through/Special Schools)

NOTE We are still providing KS3 resources to Secondary and Special Schools although there is no longer a statutory requirement for them to provide data to WG

In line with the removal of KS3 statutory collections, this will update the KS3 template and wizard to make them non-statutory going forward and update the reports with the final national data from 2024.

IMPORTANT Routines | Data Out | NDC Results | Key Stage 3 – Menu route has been removed from Secondary and Special Schools. CTF routes can still be used.

This will impact the KS3 End of Key Stage 3 NDC exports (Secondary and All Through schools incl. Special Schools) - We will now remove routines from both secondary and all through and special schools in line with overall KS3 non-statutory status in 2024/25.

English Schools: statutory updates to Assessment resources [Phonics] UPDATE

The Statutory Assessment resources for Phonics (Template and Wizard) which are provided as part of the AMAPRK folder have been updated for the 2024/25 academic year.

Apart from the rolling forward of the dates for the new academic year from 2023/24 to 2024/25 and the date for the provision of national data in the reports contained in the wizard from 2023 to 2024, the resources are unchanged since last year.

NOTE Phonics, which is assessed during KS1 will remain statutory.

- National data will be updated to 2024 values
- Use of the Engagement Model continues to be compulsory for all appropriate settings
- Revised Profiles continue to be compulsory for all appropriate settings. Validation rule 3818 has been removed!
- Multiplication Tables Check CTF menu has been added to transfer data into SIMS in line with new DfE CTF specifications for 2024/5

The following template files and wizard files have been updated for the 2024/25 academic year.

- **File Names** (templates and wizards)
- **Resource Names** (templates, wizards and individual reports)
- **External IDs** (templates, wizards and individual reports)
- **Header Notes** (templates, wizards and individual reports)
- **Create Dates** to 01/09/2024 (templates, wizards and individual reports)
- **Edit Dates** to 01/09/2024 (templates, wizards and individual reports)
- **Report contents** (individual reports) (national data has been updated this year to 2024 values)

SIMS

English Schools: updates to Assessment Resources - KS2 UPDATE

Statutory Assessment resources for English KS2 (Template and Wizard) which are provided as part of the AMAPRK folder have been updated for the 2024/25 academic year. These resources are provided in both the Primary and Secondary AMPARK folders.

Apart from the rolling forward of the dates for the new academic year from 2023/24 to 2024/25 and the date for the provision of national data in the reports contained in the wizard from 2023 to 2024, the resources are unchanged since last year.

English Schools: statutory updates to Assessment resources – MTC UPDATE

The Statutory Assessment resources for English Primary Multiplication Tables Check (Template and Wizard), which are provided as part of the AMAPRK folder, have been updated for the 2024/25 academic year.

Apart from the rolling forward of the dates for the new academic year from 2023/24 to 2024/25 and the date for the provision of national data in the reports contained in the wizard from 2023 to 2024, the resources are underlined unchanged since last year.

English - Primary Only: The DfE has provided a specification for the import of MTC data via the CTF functionality. This new routine is a 'Partial CTF' routine allowing schools to import pupils MTC results directly into the relevant aspect in SIMS7.

English Schools: statutory updates to Assessment resources Profiles UPDATE

Statutory Assessment resources for English Primary EYFS Profiles (Template and Wizard) which are provided as part of the AMAPRK folder have been updated for the 2024/25 academic year and removal of validation rule 3818. All associated CTF Transfer routines have also been updated to take account of the validation changes.

Apart from the rolling forward of the dates for the new academic year from 2023/24 to 2024/25 and the date for the provision of national data in the reports contained in the wizard from 2023 to 2024, the resources have been updated to take account of the removal of **Validation Rule 3818**.

Rule 3818 If one ELG result was an A grade they all should be.

All relevant associated CTF import and export routines have been updated to remove this rule for any results dated after the 1st of Sept 2024. Results prior to that date will be subject to the validation rules in place at that time, those after will be subject to the updated validation.

EYFS Profile – legacy and revised versions

In the 2025 update, the description for value A has changed along with associated validations to support the removal of rule 3818.

SIMS

AMPARK `WP` `WS`

Statutory Resource updates for AMPARK UPDATE

Applicable to Welsh schools

Statutory Assessment resources for English Primary and Secondary (Template and Wizard) which are provided as part of the AMAPRK folder have been updated for the 2024/25 academic year.

In line with our current policy, the last two versions are provided for any assessment resource. Where relevant, we have added new 2025 versions of resources and removed outdated 2023 versions.

> **NOTE** The resources that are no longer statutory will not have been updated. They are still available as optional resources for customers to use for non-statutory purposes.

Fees Billing `EP` `ES` `WP` `WS` `IN`

Applicable to All schools with Fees Licence

Following the Introduction of VAT on School Fees on 1 January 2025, we have made a number of changes based on Customer feedback.

Apply Charges

Focus | Fees Billing | Charging | Apply Charges

When VAT is going to be applied when selecting the charge code, the appropriate VAT amount is automatically displayed.

Additional search criteria for SEN Status have been added.

Import Chart of Accounts

Tools | Fees Billing | Import Chart of Accounts

FMS GL codes and VAT codes that have been updated and reimported into SIMS will be displayed in pink. When selected for import, a new status of Updated is displayed and is recorded in the Changes Log.

Bill Audit Report and Charges Audit Reports

Reports | Fees Billing | Billing | Bill Audit

Reports | Fees Billing | Billing | Charges Audit

Report options: All Options

A new Total column has been added to all the report options. This will display the Gross Total, e.g. Amount + VAT

- Report options: Charge Code in Detail or Summary
- VAT Code and VAT GL Code have also been added.
- Report options: Pupil in Detail

SIMS

- A total per Pupil has been added Net, VAT and Gross
- Export to Excel for all reports – export now includes columns for VAT Code and VAT GL Code

NOTE If VAT to be Applied is unchecked in **Tools | Fees Billing | Parameters** then the VAT columns will not be displayed in the reports

Transaction List Report

Reports | Fees Billing | Transactions | Transaction List

When this report is exported to Excel additional columns have been added for VAT Code, VAT GL Code, GL Account and GL Description.

Design Reports

Reports | Design Reports

VAT Code, VAT Description and VAT GL Code have been included in the Current and Previous Bill Sub-report on the Student Focus.

Enhancements to Fees Reporting

Tools | Fees Billing | Import Chart of Accounts

If your school is using SIMS FMS, if the Ledger / Cost Centre Description or the associated VAT Code has been updated and is reimported into SIMS they will display in pink to indicate a change has occurred in FMS. These can then be selected and updated.

Process Transactions UI Updates

Focus | Fees Billing | Transactions | Process Transaction

VAT Code is now displayed when the Transaction Type is Bills or Credit Notes. The VAT Code displayed is the one linked to the General Ledger Account code and is editable.

For Schools with SIMS FMS, VAT Ledger Types cannot be selected.

Generate Letters UI Update

A new option has been included to produce a Single Letter Per Payer. You can define separate templates for either a single letter per player or a letter for each pupil/payer combination. The Bill Payer search has been enhanced to include those who have a Single Bill per Payer indicator.

Fees Parameters – Email Settings

A new option of Retain Parameter setting has been included for Email Bill, Statement and Receipt. When ticked this will default to the Parameter setting. If additional documents have been included on dispatch of a Bill, Statement or Receipt then they will need to be re-attached the next time the process is run.

When unticked this will continue with the existing functionality where it defaults to the text last used when Bill, Statement or Receipt was dispatched. Any additional documents will be retained.

SIMS

Student EP ES WP WS IN

Bulk Deletion of Student Data

Applicable to All schools

Academic Year Selection

Users can now select an academic year for bulk deletion only if it is at least six full academic years in the past (previously three). This change aligns with the HMRC retention period (six years + one).

NOTE No academic year is selected by default, and available years are displayed in descending order.

Dinner Money Record-Based Deletion

Allows the deletion of student leaver records only if the Dinner Money balance is zero.

- A new column, "Ever Dinner Money," indicates whether the student has a zero balance.
- The deletion checkbox is enabled only if the balance is zero.

Data Deletion & Anonymization

Where Student Records that are linked to Dinner Money transactions have been deleted, the transactional information is retained under the placeholder "Compliance ZZ_GDPR" for financial integrity. The rest of the Student Record(s) will be deleted.

NOTE Personal data for students recorded as Employees, Contacts, Enquirers, Agents, or Bill Payers remains unchanged.

Anonymised Data Management

Applicable to All schools

Record Creation & Prevention of Duplication

When creating a new record, anonymised student details will not appear as matching entries to prevent re-linking.

If a student is anonymised using the bulk delete routine, their anonymised name (automatically set to ZZ_GDPR Compliance) will not appear as a match. If a student is manually created with the name of 'ZZ_GDPR Compliance' (and has not been deleted), this manually created record will appear as a match if the user tries to manually create a second student with the name of ZZ_GDPR Compliance. This is in line with standard SIMS record matching.

Updated Dinner Money Reporting

Applicable to All schools

Changes impact various reporting functionalities, ensuring anonymised students are handled correctly:

SIMS

- **Statistics Reports:** Anonymised students are displayed as "ZZ_GDPR, Compliance" and transactions will remain visible within the selected date range.
- **Listings Reports:** Split payments involving anonymised students display as "ZZ_GDPR, Compliance."
- **Finance Reports:** Anonymized student data is excluded from staff-related finance reports.
- **Letters:** Anonymized student leavers are not included in letter generation.
- **Audit & Reporting Dictionary:** Anonymized student transactions are included in audit logs under "ZZ_GDPR, Compliance" but will not be transferred to Discover as their records have been removed.

Exams `EP` `ES` `WP` `WS` `IN`

Exam Access Arrangements added to Student General List Fields NEW

Applicable to All schools

Reports | Student List | General Student List functionality

Added to the General Student List reporting tool is a Data Area Selector menu item for Access (Special) Arrangements and Associated Comments. Users can run reports against this data for multiple students or groups of students.

Similar to selectors such as SEN, the user has the option to show all Access Arrangements in one go or select from specific Access Arrangements as individual items.

Discover `WP` `WS`

2 new SEN Status codes added

Applicable to Welsh schools

The following status columns have been added to the 'Student by SEN Status' graph:

- **L** – LA IDP
- **C** – School IDP

NOTE No changes have been made to Discover functionality or for other Regions

Reporting `EP` `ES` `WP` `WS` `IN`

Username field added to Reporting Dictionary for System Manager Group Members NEW

Applicable to All schools

Reports | Design Reports | (Create a new report) | Permissions Groups | Groups | Members | Basic Details node

Reports | Design Reports | (Create a new report) | People | Staff | Permissions node to sit alongside 'Active Status'

The permissions required to see the data field or resultant data in a report are controlled by 'System Manager Report Dictionary - (View All)', this update makes it possible to perform full username audits across the system to identify which users have which permissions across all groups and roles within SIMS 7 System Manager 6.

SIMS

School Census Summer Return - Statutory Returns `EP` `ES`

Key Dates ^{NEW}

Census Date 15/05/2025

Attendance collected from 01/01/2025 to 20/04/2025

Exclusions collected from 01/08/2024 to 20/04/2025

Alternative Provision Placements collected from 16/01/2025 to 15/05/2025

Funding and Monitoring collected from 01/08/2024 to 15/05/2025

Learner Support collected from 01/08/2024 to 15/05/2025

Free School Meals collected from 17/01/2025 to 15/05/2025

Attendance `EP` `ES`

Removing manual attendance ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

Users (Returns Managers) cannot manually add Attendance on the return screen. All schools must record attendance using an electronic register.

Attendance Detail Report ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

The code 'C' description has been updated from 'Other authorised circumstances' to 'Other authorised exceptional circumstances.

Detail Reports `EP` `ES`

Exclusions Report ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

The first line of the Report Criteria has been amended to state: '**Students with suspensions or permanent exclusions**.

The date range has been moved to the Suspensions line.

Leavers Detail Report ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

SIMS

The Leavers Detail report now includes the age-at-date information for attendance (e.g. Leavers age 4 to 15 at 31/08/2024 with attendance (01/01/2025 to 20/04/2025))

Attendance Detail Report ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

Text has been added above the attendance grid as a reminder that on roll students are displayed at the top of the grid and that the leavers are displayed below.

NOTE Leavers are displayed below the On Roll students.

Early Years EP

Early Years panel ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

The Early Years panel in the census has been amended to display one **age at date** column, which applies to each specific census.

Statutory Return Browse EP ES

Consolidated Workstation Patch Identifier ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Routines | Statutory Returns | School Census

When a consolidated workstation patch is installed, the version number will be displayed in the browse (e.g. If the Full Version Number is 7.222.22.1 then the workstation patch version will be displayed as ID 1 in each statutory return browse. On release, the Full Version Number is 7.222.22.0.)

Grounds for Removal ^{UPDATE}

Applicable to English schools

Focus | Student | Student Details | School History

The current description for Grounds for Removal is displayed. In addition, the original description will be displayed where a student has a date of leaving before 19/08/2024 (which is the date the new descriptions came in).

SIMS

Welsh Secondary Attendance Collection Return `WS`

Key Dates <superscript>NEW</superscript>
Age at Date 31/08
Collection Start Date 01/09/2024
Collection End Date 23/05/2025

Welsh Primary Attendance Collection Return `WP`

Key Dates <superscript>NEW</superscript>
Age at Date 31/08
Collection Start Date 01/09/2024
Collection End Date 21/07/2025

SIMS Upgrade Support

Important Information – Please read before upgrading

If you are performing an upgrade spanning more than one release, you must read the release note associated with each version.

IMPORTANT For more support on performing the SIMS Upgrades please refer to the SIMS Upgrade support article.

Upgrading using SOLUS

The SIMS Online Update Service (SOLUS) enables you to download and run SIMS releases and patches via the Internet. This is achieved using SOLUS3.

For instructions on carrying out an upgrade with SOLUS3, please refer to the SOLUS3 for Schools or the SOLUS3 for Local Authorities handbook.

Support for SQL Server

SIMS, FMS and Discover, Partnership Xchange, SOLUS, and InTouch run on SQL Server 2012, SQL Server 2014, SQL Server 2016 SP3 and SQL Server 2019.

SQL2022 Update

The SQL Migration tool has been updated to enable users to upgrade their current SQL instance to SQL 2022 (taking SIMS\FMS\Discover from SQL 2012, SQL 2014, SQL 2016 or SQL 2019 to SQL 2022)

For more information on support for SQL Server and Windows environments, please refer to the SIMS Minimum Hardware and Technical Roadmap on the support portal.

General

Schools using both Fees Billing and FMS must upgrade SIMS and FMS at the same time.

Backing up SIMS and FMS

Where SIMS Personnel is used to generate Salary Projections in FMS, SIMS and FMS backups should be carried out at the same time. If one of the databases needs to be restored, the other database must be restored to the same point, i.e. if you restore the SIMS database, you must restore the FMS database to the same point and vice versa.

IMPORTANT Backups are no longer zipped, because of the number of issues caused by zipping backup files. Recent operating systems now allow the use of compressed folders, which are recommended for automatically compressing backups. Please refer to your operating system documentation for instructions on applying compression to a folder.

SIMS

Important Information Regarding the Upgrade of SIMS and Discover

You must upgrade to the SIMS 7.220 Release before upgrading Discover. If you upgrade Discover before upgrading SIMS, data will not be transferred between the SIMS and Discover databases until SIMS has been upgraded.

Auto-Deployment of SIMS and Discover

If SOLUS3 auto-deployment is enabled for Discover, we recommend that Discover auto-deployment settings start later than the SIMS auto-deployment start time plus the timeout.

If the times are not set like this, and the Discover deployment starts before the SIMS deployment, then the data transfer between SIMS and Discover will not work until the SIMS upgrade is completed.

Where to Find More Information?

Via SIMS...

For the software handbooks, navigate to the SIMS Home Page, then click the Documentation button to display the SIMS Documentation Centre.

Via the Support Portal...

User documentation is also available from the support portal (https://customer.support-ess.com/csm).

If you are unable to obtain the required handbook using any of these methods, please email us (publications@parentpay.com) and we will be pleased to send a copy to you.

Permissions

The permissions spreadsheet, which lists all permissions relating to SIMS 7.218, is available from the Documentation Centre. To access the SIMS Documentation Centre, click the Documentation button on the SIMS Home Page.

In the support portal, open the SIMS Permissions Spreadsheet.

Support for B2B

Personnel ended with the release of One version 3.74 (Spring 2021). The B2B: Personnel table previously present in this release notes have been removed.