AUTUMN TERM – START OF TERM UPDATE

Bulletin in Brief

- Important information on keeping ICT systems, including SIMS servers, update to date
- Advice on managing old or dormant user accounts on email and remote access services
- Helpful free tools available to all schools from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)

Microsoft Server 2019 installations now available

If your school is planning on a new SIMS server this year, all our new server installations will now use the latest version of Windows Server (Microsoft Server 2019), plus the newest versions of server hardware to keep your essential MIS software running smoothly and efficiently.

Please note: Microsoft Server 2012 will reach end of support in October 2023 and any server in school running Server 2012 needs to be replaced or upgraded before this date. Please check your servers.

We will be contacting schools using our support services where we are aware your school is using Server 2012. If your servers are supported by a third-party, please ask them to check your server.

Microsoft Office 2013 and older

Microsoft Office 2013 will not be supported for use with SIMS after the Autumn upgrade and drops out of official Microsoft in April 2023. If you are using Office 2013 or older, please upgrade to a recent version. Schools with our Microsoft EES subscription are able to install the latest versions of Microsoft Office on all devices at no additional charge. Pupils can also download up to 5 copies to use at home.

New "RBUSS Backup nearly full" notifications

We have added a new notification service to the Remote Data Backup (RBUSS) service to help schools know when they are approaching their backup limit. If you receive one of these automated email notifications, please contact us to purchase an increased backup size or alternatively remove unnecessary files from the backup location.

Remote Desktop Access (SGD) Service – Annual accounts clean up

We are now undertaking the annual review of schools' Remote Desktop Access (SGD) user accounts, where we check for dormant accounts. We may contact you during the Autumn term to check your school has the correct users listed. We will never ask you to provide login or password details for these users.

Microsoft Office 365 accounts

The start of term is also a good time to review which users your school has listed on its Office 365. If you have accounts for students or staff who have left these will need to be removed and you may have new intake to add to Office 365. Further information on our Microsoft Office 365 service options plus how to upload new users are available in the Office 365 support section of our website and in the service definition.

Passwords and Accounts

Always ensure you know which of your staff have accounts to access your important ICT services and which staff have administrator access. The following list of services we provide to schools all feature the ability to nominate staff who can manage other users and the setup of their accounts:

- Netsweeper reporting
- Anti-Virus and Threat Protection (Sophos Central)
- School Website Service (PrimarySite)
- Mobile Device management (Lightspeed systems)
- Microsoft Office 365 (Email and cloud applications)
- SIMS & FMS
- SIMS Teacher App and Parent App
- ParentPay (e-payments and income management)
- SchoolComms (Parental Messaging Service)

Updated ICT Service Centre Contact Times

From the 1st of September 2022 our operational hours for telephone and online support will be 8am to 5pm. This includes support from our schools' technical support team in the ICT Service Centre (Option 1) and our Schools Applications team (Option 3), who provide schools' SIMS software consultancy and support.

Most schools contact us in the morning, either via phone or our Online ICT Incident reporting form. ICT incidents can be logged online by schools 24/7, with any logged after 5pm being picked up on the next working day by our schools technicians or SIMS support staff as appropriate. Full contact details are available on our website.

Cyber Tools for UK Schools - Webcheck and MailCheck

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has recently offered two new tools for schools to help check the security of their websites and email services. Both are useful tools for schools and are available free of charge:

- Webcheck will check your school website to ensure its security settings are appropriately configured.
- Mailcheck allows schools to check that their email systems are also appropriately configured.

The output from both services can be quite comprehensive, but it also gives a simple traffic light colour code to highlight if something is just informational, a recommendation or requires action. Find out more on their website.

Lancashire County Council Education Digital Services