Service Specification
IT Services

SIPS IT offer the following services:
MIS
SIMS Support
Arbor Support
SIMS Exams Support
NovaT
Tali – (Fund Manager)

Technical
Remote Support
On-Site Support
SOLUS3 Managed Upgrade Service
File Safe
File Safe complete
Hosted DNS
Web Hosting
NGFL/Trustnet
SCOMIS

Operational Support
IT procurement
Project Support
Cyber Security Consultancy
Network Audits

Please see the following sections for details on each service package.

Services (MIS)
SIMS Support

To assist schools in the effective use of MIS by providing a reliable, practical and high-quality MIS support service.

SIPS IT MIS support are there to accommodate any changes made to statutory requirements and in using SIMS to help support a school's operations and priorities.

What is covered?

Unlimited calls or online requests to our Service Desk
Full access to our Knowledge Base via our portal
Support for SIMS suite of applications
Remote fix of SIMS application issues
Enhanced responsiveness during Ofsted visits*
Database recovery service
System recovery (re-installation of SIMS)
SIMS upgrade release management
Business Support Services
Advice & guidance on the use of SIMS
Unlimited access to SIPS scheduled training
Assistance in the statutory requirements of the DFE
Bespoke configuration of SIMS for your setting
Additional support for new office staff
Standard report writing**
Discounted rates on scheduled training
Discounted rates on consultancy services
Keeping you up to date
Upgrade notices & communications
Annual review (virtual meeting)
Annual report & health check of your whole school MIS/ICT

Advanced Support / Consultancy Services (additional charges apply - available on request)

Personalised Timetabling
Bespoke report creation
MIS migration planning & implementation
Strategic ICT planning

- Unlimited calls, emails or online requests to our service desk, benefitting from first line support and quickly escalated to second or third-line support when required.
- Full access to our knowledge base on our customer portal, which is constantly growing and evolving to provide you with a comprehensive resource centre for common fixes and self-help guides 24/7.
- Remote support is used to help resolve your cases as quickly and efficiently as possible. Several methods of secure remote connection are used to access school's live data, ensuring a swift efficient response to issues raised, allowing us to resolve many problems without the need to wait for a call out.
- Unlimited access to SIPS IT training courses held in our training room, based at our offices:

    Fourth Floor
    Guardian House
    Cronehills Linkway
    West Bromwich
    West Midlands
    B70 8GS

    Courses can be booked here [MySIPSHub](). Please note places are limited and booked on a first come, first serve basis.
- Microsoft TEAMS sessions will be used to provide face to face contact with schools, enabling us to deliver training and support to individuals or groups. This helps reduce costs associated with site visits, which allows SIPS IT to keep charges as low as possible for customers and reduces our carbon footprint.
- There may on occasion be the need for SIPS IT to recommend a school visit if this is unable to be done via Microsoft Teams.
- We will provide the SIMS support necessary in order to assist you in the fulfilment of the statutory requirements of the DfE and the transfer of the data either to the Local Authority, the DfE, or other schools.
(Please note whilst we will make our best endeavours to support the Annual Catholic School Census this is not a statutory requirement of the DfE and whilst ESS will issue software to support the collection of the data, they and therefore we, cannot guarantee that manual editing of the data will not be necessary).
- When used in conjunction with SIMS.net, we assist in the use of the following as from 1st April 2022:
Tali (Fund Manager), Emerge, MS Office, Secure Data Transfer, Mailsafe.

Our Expectations

We expect customers to:

- Use workstations/servers of a recommended specification when running software covered within this agreement
- Install Microsoft Office 2010 or later, on the school Administration server, or alternatively provide a dedicated remote access workstation with MS Office installed, that is always available to the SIPS IT team in order to resolve problems/queries remotely.
- Make best endeavours to enable remote access for SIPS IT to your server with sufficient access rights to access any SIMS module.
- Ensure a suitable backup regime for ALL required data is in place and regularly checked. Ensure you are aware of what must be backed up in order to ensure that a full working copy of SIMS can be restored.
  Please note: Backups are the responsibility of the school and not SIPS IT unless you subscribe to the SIPS IT FileSafe managed service.
- Report problems promptly and accurately, giving as much detail as possible, to assist SIPS IT in providing as full a diagnosis and response as possible.
- Access mysips.sipseducation.co.uk daily to ensure you are aware of all news items as they are posted.
- Ensure SIPS IT has a current up to date list of Key Contacts at the school.
- Apply all patches and upgrades to your SIMS MIS system to ensure it is kept at the most recent version (unless using SIPS IT SOLUS3 Managed service whereby this work will be undertaken by SIPS IT on your behalf).

Arbor Support

To assist schools in the effective use of MIS by providing a reliable, practical and high-quality MIS support service.

SIPS IT MIS support are there to accommodate any changes made to statutory requirements and in using SIMS to help support a school's operations and priorities.

What is covered?

Experienced Service Desk Support	Base Support for your day to day functionality	Premium Support for enhanced used or Arbor
Unlimited calls or online requests to our Service Desk	Yes	Yes
Full access to our Knowledge Base via our portal		Yes
Support for all Arbor application issues	Yes	Yes
Remote fix of Arbor application issues		Yes
Enhance responsiveness during Ofsted	Yes	Yes
Database recovery service		Yes

Business Support Services	Base Support for your day to day functionality	Premium Support for enhanced used or Arbor
Advice and guidance on the use of Arbor	Yes	Yes
Unlimited access to SIPS scheduled training		Yes
Assistance in the statutory requirements of the DFE	Yes	Yes
Bespoke configuration of Arbor for your sett9ing		Yes

		Yes
Additional support for new office staff		Yes
Standard report writing		Yes
Discounted rates on scheduled training	Yes	Yes
Discounted rates on consultancy services	Yes	Yes

Keeping you up to date	Base Support for your day to day functionality	Premium Support for enhanced used or Arbor
Upgrades notices and communications	Yes	Yes
Annual review (virtual meeting)	Yes	Yes
Annual report and health check of your whole school MIS		Yes

Advances Support and Consultancy Services	Personalised timetabling Bespoke report creation MIS Migration planning and implementation Strategic ICT planning	Price on request

Our Expectation
- Report problems promptly and accurately, giving as much detail as possible, to assist SIPS IT in providing as full a diagnosis and response as possible.
- Access mysips.sips.co.uk daily to ensure you are aware of all news items as they are posted.
- Ensure SIPS IT has a current up to date list of Key Contacts at the school.

SIMS Exams Support
To assist schools in the effective use of SIMS Exam Organiser Module by providing a reliable, practical and high-quality Exam's support service.

What is covered?

- Unlimited calls, emails, or online requests to our service desk, relating to Exams Organiser Module.
- All areas of Exams Organiser Module covered including managing seasons, importing base data, allocating candidate numbers and UCI's, entries, creating a submission file, resolving clashes and creating seating plans and timetables, importing results following download from A2C, adding results manually, managing and calculating performance indicators and Internal mock exams.
- Exam courses at reduced rates. **Our Expectation**
- Apply all patches and upgrades to your SIMS MIS system to ensure it is kept at the most recent version (unless using SIPS IT SOLUS3 Managed service whereby this work will be undertaken by SIPS IT on your behalf).
- Report problems promptly and accurately, giving as much detail as possible, to assist SIPS IT in providing as full a diagnosis and response as possible.

NovaT Support
To assist schools in the effective use of SIMS NovaT Module by providing a reliable, practical and high quality NovaT support service.

What is covered?
- Unlimited calls, emails or online requests to our service desk, benefitting from first line support and quickly escalated to second or third-line support when required. **Our Expectation**
- Report problems promptly and accurately, giving as much detail as possible, to assist SIPS IT in providing as full a diagnosis and response as possible.
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Tali Support (formerly – Fund Manager)
To assist schools in the effective use of Tali, maximising the functionality of this fund manager software and troubleshooting any problems.

Our Expectation
- The MIS Integration App must be always running on the server to ensure smooth and accurate data transfer.
- It is the school's responsibility to have the school fund manager accounts audited annually.

Hosted SIMS (SCOMIS)

Objective of the Service
Working with our trusted partner SCOMIS, we can bring your SIMS system to the cloud without changing MIS. It's SIMS, as you know it – but in the cloud!

Remove the burden of managing SIMS, FMS and Discover onsite with school-based servers by using SCOMIS' fully managed Hosted Application Service. Without disrupting any teaching and learning, your upgrades, patches, backups, and updates are taken care of remotely as well as ensuring trouble-free third-party software integration with SIMS.

You don't need the latest hardware and you can access your data securely, from anywhere with an internet connection using devices including Windows, Android, Chromebooks, iOS or Mac.

Federations and Trusts can also benefit from multi school access via the Scomis school chooser. No longer do you have to visit each site, simply select the site when logging in and you can access their data as if you were sat in the school!

What is covered?
- Hosting of your SIMS, Discover and FMS databases within the cloud. • Managed 3rd Party Integrations
- Backups of your SIMS Data.
- Unlimited Users
- 24/7/365 access to your data from anywhere.
- Target of 99% availability during school hours.
- GDPR and ISO27001 certified

Services (Technical)

To support your schools IT infrastructure and systems, we offer 2 technical support packages complimented by several other services and solutions.

- **Remote Support:** Here when you need us. Email, Phone or Chat one of our technical experts will help to troubleshoot and resolve your issue.
- **On-Site Support:** All the benefits of our Remote Support service, combined with a regular on-site technical expert.

Remote Support

Our Remote Technical Support Service helps keep your IT network functioning. Available via telephone, email, or chat, one of our team of technical experts will work to troubleshoot and quickly resolve your IT issue allowing your staff to continue working.

This service is perfect for schools who require minimal IT support or those with an on-site technician who needs additional help or support.

This service is designed to remotely support your school and staff with any IT issues. Should an on-site visit be required, this will be chargeable at the current rate. The service also does not include the undertaking of project work, please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Our Expectation

- Your schools IT systems are running on either Windows or Macintosh operating systems and correctly licenced in line with the relevant developers licencing rules.
- Your school operates a daily backup of IT systems, data, and services. **SIPS IT will not be responsible for the backup of any data or systems**
- Systems and services are kept up-to-date and in line with developer/manufacturer guidance in order to maintain data integrity and minimise the risk of security breaches or virus infection.
- Ensure that between 2-4 nominated contact names are provided to ensure effective communication. One of these contacts will need to be a member of the schools SLT.
- Ensure that end-users are trained on products for which they require support.
- Report problems promptly and accurately, giving as much detail as possible to assist SIPS IT in providing as full a diagnosis and response as possible.

- Allow us reasonable access to the school and your systems via our preferred remote access toolset. Along with any relevant passwords to support our team in the resolution of issues.
- Be prepared to make your time available to liaise with us. o Follow our advice on the proper use and protection of your systems.
- Ensure adequate licence levels, software applications and systems are adhered to and up to date. It is the school's responsibility to ensure all software licencing agreements for all software you use are current and do not exceed number of licences purchased.
- All requests are to be logged by a phone call (0121 2963000 option 1 for IT), by email (it@sips.co.uk) or with the technician directly when on site if subscribing to SIPS IT On-Site Support. o All health and safety guidelines are followed when asking a technician to carry out any work on any equipment (if a site visit is required).
- Advise us of any major changes to the school network / third-party systems that may affect our support
- Apply an Acceptable Use Policy for all users
- Follow advice and guidance from SIPS IT technical to ensure a speedy resolution – failure to do so could result in a request being closed.

On-Site Support
All the great benefits of our Remote Support Service, combined with a regular on-site visit by one of our team of technical experts.

We will provide one of the team for either a half day or full day session to ensure your schools IT functions at optimum levels. These sessions can be on a daily, weekly, or fortnightly basis during school term times.

- Half Day (3.5-hour AM or PM sessions)
    - AM: 08:30 -12:00
    - PM: 13:00 – 16:30

- Full Day (7.5-hour full day sessions)
    - 08:30 – 16:30, with a 30-minute lunch break.

What is covered?
As your schools IT partner, we will check to ensure the below systems and services are up-to-date and functioning correctly, allowing your staff to focus on teaching your young people.
- Data backup

- Anti-virus
- Network & Servers
- Broadband
- Computer systems & Hardware

We proactively monitor your school's network, often resolving issues behind the scenes before they are noticed by end users. The information from these alerts allows us to build a picture of your school, highlighting areas for improvement and action as part of our regular IT audit.

The evolution of technology has impacted every aspect of our lives and education is no different. We're keen to ensure that your school, staff, and students maximise the use of IT within the classroom to support learning and academic performance. Our senior technical team will work alongside school leaders to produce 3–5-year action plans – agreeing the future vision and IT strategy. This allows schools to calculate the required investment may be needed and plan how this vision for the future is realised.

What are the limits?
Whilst we endeavour to undertake most tasks, our team cannot:
- Replace and/or maintain of projectors and filters o Perform electrical work
- Work at height or in challenging spaces o Physically repair hardware o Train end users or staff. o Undertake work which would breach health and safety legislation.

Terms of service

- If we are unable to meet the scheduled appointment, then we will reschedule the visit. We will ensure that all visits purchased are delivered within a 39-week period.
- If a school is closed and we are unable to deliver the service on-site, we will continue to deliver the service in a remote capacity in line with the scheduled visit. o The technician allocated is from a pool of technical staff so may not be the same person each time. This pool may include the use of apprentices as part of their professional development. o If your regular technician cannot attend, we will send a replacement technician in their place or arrange to carry out the session remotely.
- Visits are limited to school hours and cannot be scheduled for evenings, weekends, public holidays, or during our Christmas Shutdown period.
- If a technician is not able to resolve an issue, they will escalate with their line manager or senior technician to investigate further.

- A technician has the right to escalate to management any work they deem unsafe or feel accessing the kit does not adhere to health and safety guidelines.
- Any work deemed not to be part of the on-going maintenance of your IT systems will be considered a project and a quote will be provided upon request. o Any issues or changes deemed to have been caused by a school or a school commissioned third-party, SIPS IT reserve the right to charge for involvement in any resolution.

Our Expectation
- All points covered under "Remote Support"
- The school inform SIPS IT of any changes or school closures that could impact our ability to deliver the service

SOLUS3 Managed Upgrade Service

To fully manage SOLUS3 within your school, ensuring SIMS, Discover and FMS is always up to date. **Service Specification What is covered?** o SIMS, Discover and FMS upgrades will be deployed in a timely fashion. Schools will be given prior notice and advised of the date and time via email.

- SIMS, Discover and FMS Patches will be deployed to schools as and when required.

Our Expectation
- Make best endeavours to allow SIPS IT remote access to your server to allow us to manage your SOLUS3 application. o All teacher laptops and computers are connected to the school's domain network and are switched on at the time of planned upgrade.

File Safe Support

To back up your school's data to our online cloud backup platform, ensuring all your school's data is securely stored and protected against total loss should the infrastructure or fabric of the school be compromised.

What is covered?
- Cloud storage for your school's data, dependant on storage plan purchased.
- Daily Backups with a retention period of up to 3-months for off-site*
- Support for Hyper V and Physical Servers as well as licenced VMWare Hosts**

- All your data is stored in our UK data centres.
- Your data is encrypted
- Enhanced monitoring for your backups with email alerts should an issue with your backup occur. Customers who purchase Remote Technical Support service are notified but as your IT support team, we will remotely investigate and resolve remotely where possible.

What are the limits?
- Retention period is set to 3 months for MIS Servers and 1 month for all other servers as standard
- Physical servers and servers not running Windows Hyper V or fully licenced VMWare technologies will incur additional costs
- A fair usage policy includes up to 8 Virtual Machines and are included in the service (additional VMs (virtual machines) can be backed up for an annual fee, please contact SIPS IT for a quote)
- We reserve the right with a Physical Server backup and servers not running Windows Hyper V or fully licenced VMWare technologies to limit the backup to selected "Files and Folders" only. o Restoration of servers may incur additional costs

Our Expectation
- o A nominated contact email address is provided for notifications to be sent to in the event of a backup failure.
- o Any notifications received from the backup system are actioned by the school in a timely manner to ensure continuity of service.
- o It is the school's responsibility to check backups are completing successfully and the data storage plan purchased is not exceeded.
- o If required, allow SIPS IT remote access to your server to allow us to manage the backup application. o All devices to be backed up are connected to the network and have internet connectivity.
- o Firewall ports are open as requested dependant on backup provider requirements (to be provided upon request).
- o In the event of an issue, if your technical support team is not SIPS IT, your technical support team will resolve any issues with the backup without delay.

Domain Management and Hosted DNS
Registration and renewal of your schools' domains.

Management of DNS to translate your school's domain names into the computer identifiers required to route traffic to the appropriate service, such as your website.

What is covered?

- Domain registration for new domains (Costs may be incurred) o Renewal of existing domains (Costs may be incurred) o Reminders for when your Domain Name is due for renewal o Unlimited DNS change requests.

What are the limits?

- Management of up to 10 domain names per school

Our Expectation

- Reasonable notice is given for any DNS changes to be made o DNS Change Requests are sent in text not image format o DNS Change Requests are sent to IT@Sips.co.uk from a school nominated contact

Web Hosting

We will host your school's websites on our web hosting platform.

What is covered?

- 5GB of hosting storage
- Access to the hosting platform for nominated contacts
- Features such as subdomains, FTP account access, Managed WordPress, and much more **Our Expectation**
- It is the school's responsibility to upload the website, backup website data and make amendments to the website.
- SIPS IT are not responsible for the maintenance of your school's website.

NGFL/Trustnet First Line Support

To support the effective operation of your broadband connection with NGFL/Trustnet. **Service Specification What's covered?**

- Troubleshooting connectivity problems
- We will endeavour to provide replacement equipment at short notice should any of the broadband equipment fail.
- Support for all NGFL's added value components.
- Support with local network migration to NGFLs IP range upon joining the NGFL service.
- We will translate the technical information required for your firewall change requests to ensure operation of services such as CCTV and VOIP phone systems, that need to be operational on the school's broadband connection.

What are the limits?

- For NGFL additional services, support will be given but implementation is not included.
- Any issue requiring a site visit to resolve is chargeable at our current rates
- End user training is not included **Our Expectation**
- If equipment is required to be reset prior to any troubleshooting, this should be carried out by a competent member of school staff
- Any changes to website filtering requests must come from a school nominated contact by email to IT@sips.co.uk
- Access to network cabinets and schools IT systems is provided if required by SIPS IT

8. Escalations and Feedback

We pride ourselves on excellent customer service, but in the unlikely event you have a complaint, please do not hesitate to contact the service desk who will log this, ensuring the relevant person contacts you back.
We would also welcome positive feedback, which will ensure we can provide a continuously improving service.

Contact Details and Opening Times

Contact us in the following ways

Telephone: 0121 296 3000 Option 1

- Your calls will be picked up and if possible, dealt with straight away by our first line team. If your call needs further support, it will be escalated and one of our senior support advisors will get back to you as soon as possible.

Email: it@sips.co.uk

- Log a ticket with us via email. Please give us as much information as possible within your email. What the problem or query is, when it is happening and where you see it.

Online: support.sips.co.uk

- Raise a request, again giving us as much detail as possible regarding your request. What the problem or query is, when it is happening and where you see it.
- Click onto our Customer Portal, where you can access our constantly growing and evolving knowledge base. Providing you with a comprehensive

resource centre for common fixes and self-help guides 24/7. **Hours of Business**

The IT Service Desk is open
Term Time   8:15am – 4:30pm Monday to Thursday
                   8:15am – 4:00 Friday

Non-Term Time   8:15am – 4:00pm Monday to Thursday
                   8:15am – 3:30 Friday

(Support during school holidays will operate at a slightly reduced level – and where holiday dates differ normal services will operate whenever possible). An answer machine service will operate outside the above hours and very occasionally, during operating hours due to a high level of incoming calls. The office will be closed on all Bank Holidays, and in addition the period between Christmas and New Year. Precise details of Christmas closure will be published on our website for emergencies that may occur on the non Bank Holiday days during this period.

Priorities and Resolution Times

We always strive to answer your calls as quickly as possible, however your query or problem will be classified as one of four service levels, depending on the impact and resolved within the agreed timescale.

Service Level	Impact	Resolution Time
P1 –Major	Critical system inaccessible Complete network interruption Multiple users impacted No feasible alternative way of working	4 hours
P2 – High	Critical system – issue with access Non-critical system / function inaccessible Intermittent network access Non-critical issues impacting multiple users No preferred method of operating	24 hours
P3 – Medium	Non-critical function unusable or slow Operational but non-service impacting issue Alternative method of operating available	3 days

P4 – Low	Low / No impact to service Limited impact on users Alternative methods of operating available Project Work (initial response)	5 days