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EDUCATION
AND SKILLS**

POD information for schools with software providers

Statistics Section

September 2014

Introduction

The Primary Online Database (POD) is live for schools from September 15th 2014. From this date schools will be able to begin entering individual data for all of their pupils into POD.

Many primary schools already have commercial school administration systems in place which hold data on existing pupils in the school. In order to avoid schools having to enter all of this existing pupil data again into POD, discussions have been ongoing between the Department of Education and Skills and primary school software providers to facilitate exporting the data from school local software and uploading it automatically to POD.

This document outlines the current position of all of the school software providers that the Department is aware of, in relation to exporting data into POD. This document will be updated as more information becomes available.

Note that the information below relates only to the arrangements to be put in place for the initial data population phase of the project, running from September 2014 to March 2015. After this phase, all future new entrants data and updates to existing pupil data must be made initially in POD. POD will be considered going forward to be the definitive source of pupil information, and so it is important that it is kept up to date regularly and act as the first point of entry for new information. Software providers are developing methods to sync with POD in the longer term to ensure that there is harmonised data between the local school admin software and POD.

A: General information for schools

What should I do if I have my pupil data stored in commercial school admin software?

Section B below outlines the plans and progress each individual software provider has made to allow data to be uploaded automatically to POD. Please see the details given by your individual software provider and contact them in the first instance for further information.

How will my pupil data be exported from my software?

Depending on the software provider, schools will have a procedure in place either to export the data from their software into an Excel template, or the software providers will do the population on the schools behalf. Please see Section B below for further details.

It should be noted that schools may have to fill in extra information about each pupil either into their Excel template or into their local software before export in order for their record to be accepted into POD. Some fields are mandatory and the pupil record cannot be saved to POD until they have been completed.

How will the Department receive my data?

Any personal pupil data being sent into the Department must first be encrypted. Instructions on how to encrypt your data are available from the POD helpdesk. In some cases software providers may do this on behalf of schools and in others schools will have to encrypt the data themselves. Please contact the POD helpdesk on 01 8892311 if you are having problems or need further assistance with encryption.

I don't have all the pupil data required for POD stored in my software.

In the case of mandatory fields, this information must be entered before the data can be uploaded to POD. If Excel templates are returned with blank mandatory fields then it will not be possible to upload the pupil details until these fields have been filled. It is possible to load data where non-mandatory fields are left blank. These fields can be updated in POD as the information becomes available from the school. Schools are urged to fill in as much information as possible and keep the information as up to date as possible.

B: Information on specific software providers

SchoolWare

SchoolWare have been working on updating their software to take into account POD requirements, and allow for data to be exported and uploaded to POD. It is expected that the functionality will be completed in late September.

SchoolWare users are advised to await a call from their provider in order to arrange for an updating of their school software.

Advanced Learning (Facility Software)

Advanced Learning are currently undertaking research to investigate the feasibility of implementing a process for the collection and upload of the pupil variables required for the POD programme. Schools that use Facility as their management information system will be contacted directly, to be informed of their full plans and any resulting timelines. This information will be updated as soon as we receive updated information on POD-related development from Advanced Learning.

Visual Solutions

Visual Solutions Limited have not completed any POD related development to date. They are currently considering how to proceed in relation to POD and will contact schools directly. This information will be updated as soon as we receive updated information on POD-related development from Visual Solutions Limited.

Aladdin

Working with the Department of Education and Skills and POD Pilot schools, Aladdin has developed new ways to support schools with the implementation of POD.

How do I upload my student information into POD?

Simply turn on POD integration and your student information will be uploaded in a reliable, fast and secure way, directly from Aladdin into POD. There will be no need for schools with Aladdin to use the POD Excel spreadsheet or manually enter information into POD. From October 2014, sign in to Aladdin, click on Admin/Settings/POD and follow the instructions on the screen to turn on POD integration.

Is there an easy way to check what information I need to collect for POD?

To see a quick list of student information you may be missing for POD, from September 2014, simply sign in to Aladdin, click on Admin/Settings/POD and click the 'POD data check' button to run the check.

Edvance

For the pilot phase of POD, Edvance did not undertake any related development. They are currently reviewing what they can do to help customers with the implementation of POD. Edvance will revert to schools on this issue in the coming weeks. Schools with Edvance software are advised to contact their software provider in the first instance for an update.

eChipmunk/Lurtel

Lurtel have created a user manual for the data population of POD for schools using their software, which can be accessed at

<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Primary-Online-Database-POD-/Software-Providers.html>

SalesPulse

SalesPulse has developed a facility that will update your data to match the POD data as far as possible. They can also exports school data to an excel template which is suitable for upload to POD. Schools will need to review this data in the excel template which will highlight any missing information which you will collect before sending to POD. When the template is complete, schools should

encrypt the file as per instructions which will be supplied and emailed it to pod@education.gov.ie.

Databiz

Databiz has added a module to their software to make the transition to POD as easy as possible. The software will automatically generate a data collection form to help facilitate this process. When schools have entered all relevant data, Databiz will transfer information to POD for upload. A sync process is being developed which will sync from POD to their software and this functionality will be completed shortly. Databiz will be contacting schools to provide further instruction and documentation

School Online

School Online have added POD variables to their software and have added a function so schools can export validated data for upload to POD. School Online customers are advised to collect and populate POD variables on the School Online system. When they have successfully exported a file they should then contact the POD Helpdesk (pod@education.gov.ie) for further instructions.

Dataset

Dataset will not be participating in any development work for POD and will not be continuing in the Primary market. Dataset recommend that school users ring them at 01-460 3785 for further clarification.

If your software provider is not on the list above please contact us at the POD helpdesk.