
Attendance Administration

This class covers the management of PowerSchool attendance. You will work with:

- Attendance Setup
- Attendance Code categories
- Attendance Codes
- Attendance Conversions
- Attendance Process

Attendance Setup and Preferences

Preferences

The first step in setting up attendance options is to complete the Attendance Preferences page. On the Start page click **School > Preferences**. The items on this page are school- and year-specific. The following sections outline options you can set.

Attendance Recording Method and Default Attendance Page

Choose the attendance recording method by checking the appropriate box or boxes. Some schools use multiple attendance recording methods. The four choices are Meeting, Daily, Time, and Interval. If you select more than one method, choose which will be the default attendance method.

Audit Attendance Records

Select **Audit attendance records** if you want PowerSchool to keep track of any change, the previous value, and who made the change.

Enable Multiple Character Attendance Codes

By default, only single-character attendance codes are allowed. However, to create multiple-character attendance codes, select **Enable multiple character attendance codes**.

Meeting and Daily Attendance Bridge

In schools that use both daily and meeting attendance methods, PowerSchool minimizes the attendance maintenance effort by automatically creating a daily attendance record when meeting attendance is recorded. This way the attendance administrator does not have to manually record daily attendance. Most schools that use daily attendance also use meeting attendance.

The school administrator must determine which meeting period should represent the daily meeting attendance. This period is often homeroom. The attendance code

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that the teacher or attendance administrator assigns to the meeting period becomes the attendance code assigned to the daily attendance record.

To set the bridge that transfers the code from one method to another, on the Start Page click **School > Bell Schedules > Edit Schedule**. On the Bell Schedule: Regular Schedule page, click the number of the period to access the Edit Bell Schedule Item page. On the Edit Bell Schedule Item page, choose one bell period to act as the bridge to the daily attendance record and select **Use For Daily Attendance**.

The daily attendance record is created for both One- and Two-way bridge options. Set the preferred method by selecting One-way or Two-way on the Attendance Preferences page. If you select the Two-way option, then in addition to creating the daily attendance record, the system creates a meeting record when the user takes daily attendance.

Number of School Days Teachers May Alter Attendance Prior and After Current Date

On the Attendance Preferences page, you can also establish an attendance recording grace period by defining the number of days before and after the current date teachers can enter/edit attendance in the gradebook.

Count these codes for period conversion

On the Attendance Preferences page, choose **Presents** if your school calculates attendance using the number of periods a student is present in a day, the positive attendance method. Choose **Absences** if your school calculates negative attendance using the number of periods a student is absent in a day.

Activity 1 – Review attendance preferences

Your principal has asked you to verify the attendance preferences that have been set up for your school. On the Start Page, click **School > Preferences** to get answers to these questions.

1. What is the Attendance recording method for this school?
2. What is the default attendance page?
3. What kind of attendance bridge is selected?
4. Is there a restriction on the number of days teachers may alter attendance prior to or after the current date? If so, how many days are allowed?
5. What codes are counted for period conversion?
6. Is passing time deducted?

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Attendance Code Categories

Attendance code categories group attendance codes by classification so that it is possible to run category-based reports and searches. The codes Excused and Tardy are automatically set up; school staff can create other categories.

To add, edit, or delete an attendance code category, click **School > Attendance Code Categories**. Code categories are unique to each school and school year. However, attendance code categories are the one exception to year-specific data. They are a constant and you should not delete them from any year that uses them.

After you create attendance code categories, the next step is to create and associate attendance codes with the categories.

Attendance Codes

Attendance codes are used to define values, points, and calculations for school-specific attendance codes. Examples of codes are A (Absent), T (Tardy), P (Parent Excused), and F (Field Trip). In a typical PowerSchool setup, blank, or no code, represents Present, and you should assign it a sort order of "1." To add, edit, or delete an attendance code, click **School > Attendance Codes**. On this page, set up the codes associated with a particular attendance code category.

The table below defines the codes that you cannot use because they are reserved for PowerSchool system use.

Attendance Code Categories	Present	Absent	Tardy	Excused
Do NOT	ABS	*ABS	TAR	*TAR
use these codes!		ALL	*ALL	

Attendance Points

When you create an attendance code, you can assign it a point value. This value represents the number of points awarded when a student receives this code. It can be either a positive or negative number. Examples are absent=1, tardy=.5, and present=0. Although assigning attendance points is optional, attendance points can help you identify students with chronic attendance problems. You can use a special search code to search for students who have accumulated excessive attendance points for the semester. For example, on the Start Page, in the Search Students field, enter `*attendance_points (s1)>9` to search for all students with more than 9 attendance points during Semester 1.

In addition to assigning attendance points when you set up attendance codes, you can also set up the grade that will automatically be awarded if a student's attendance points exceed the specified limit. To perform this setup, click **School > Final Grade Setup**. Then click the link for the appropriate term and enter the number of attendance points and grade.

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Activity 2 – Set up attendance codes

Practice setting up an additional attendance code for your school.

1. On the Start Page, click **School > Attendance Codes** to determine how many attendance codes exist in the sample data
2. Are there any codes that are different from the ones in use at your school? If so, which ones?
3. Click **New**
4. Enter **WS** for the Code and **work study hours** for the Description
5. Click **Present** for Presence Status, and **Excused** for Code Categories
6. Enter **1** in the Points field, and choose **Yes** for Teachers can assign
7. Select **This attendance code earns ADA credit**
8. Enter a number for the sort order that will place this code last in the list
9. Your trainer will designate one person to click **Submit**
10. On the main menu, click **School > Final Grade Setup**
11. Click one of the terms to open the Edit Final Grade page
12. What settings do you see for changing the grade based on attendance points?
13. How is this set at your school?

Full-Time Equivalencies (FTEs)

Full-Time Equivalencies (FTEs) define how daily attendance values are calculated for a group of students. This identifier is used in schools that need to associate groups of students with different attendance values for the same day, such as a school that has both full-time and half-time students.

You can set up FTE groups for students who:

- Attend school only half-time
- Attend a concurrent-enrollment program at another school for part of their classes
- Are in a work-release program
- Are in half-day kindergarten

FTEs are also used for reporting Average Daily Attendance, Average Daily Membership (ADA/ADM) and other reports. FTEs are school- and year-specific, but will be duplicated when you create new years. To access the Full-Time Equivalencies (FTE) page, click **School > Full-Time Equivalencies (FTE)**.

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Activity 3 – Set FTE types

Set the FTE type for all kindergarten students to half-day.

1. Verify that you are at the elementary school.
2. Search for and select a kindergarten student whose last name starts with the same letter as yours, and write the student's name here: _____
3. Click **Transfer Info**
4. Click the date under Current Enrollment Entry Date/Code
5. For Full-Time Equivalency, choose **Half Time**, then click **Submit**
6. Return to the Start Page and click **System > Direct Database Export (DDE)**
7. For the Current Table, choose **Students**
8. To search for the kindergarten student you selected, choose **Last_Name =** and type the last name of the student
9. Click **Search only in records belonging to Washington Elementary** and then click **Search all records in this table**
10. Click **List View**, and then click the Record ID number of your student
11. Scroll down to find the field FTEID and write the number here: _____
That number represents the value "Half Time."
12. Return to the Start Page and search for all kindergarten students
13. From the list of Functions below the student list, click **Student Field Value**
14. For Field to Change, enter FTEID
15. For New Field Value, type the FTEID number from step 9
16. Do not click Submit unless instructed by your trainer, since everyone will be working with the same students

Attendance Conversions

Attendance conversions determine how PowerSchool converts data into ADA values. You can create three types of attendance conversions: Period, Code, and Time. Period conversion is used with meeting attendance, Code is used with daily attendance, and Time can be used with either. You need to define only the conversion type that applies to the FTE in question.

To define the conversions, click **School > Attendance Conversions**. You need to link Attendance conversions to Bell Schedules. Click **School > Bell Schedules**, and

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then click the name of the Bell Schedule to bring up the Attendance Conversion Method menu.

Activity 4 – Verify attendance conversions

The principal at the elementary school has asked you to check your school's attendance setup for FTEs and conversions.

1. Verify that you are at the elementary school
2. On the Start Page, click **School > Full-Time Equivalencies (FTE)**
3. What FTEs have been set up?
4. Click **School > Attendance Conversions**
5. What conversions do you see?
6. How many minutes does a full-day student have to miss to be counted absent?
7. How many minutes does a half-day student have to miss to be counted absent?

Positive and Negative Attendance

Some states require schools to track negative attendance, which means that the student is absent unless noted otherwise.

The default in PowerSchool is positive attendance. A student is counted as present unless noted otherwise.

In order for attendance reports to meet your state requirements, you need to set up the attendance conversions properly. Once you have completed the setup, these values appear in the reports.

Bell Schedules

Bell schedules indicate the start and end times for each period. All periods used for scheduling purposes must have an associated bell schedule. Secondary schools often set the bell schedule to match course periods. At an elementary school, a bell schedule might have just two periods, morning and afternoon. You can designate the morning period as the bridge period by selecting **Use For Daily Attendance** on the morning period's Edit Bell Schedule Item page.

When you set up your school calendar, you can associate different bell schedules with special days. For example, you can set up a bell schedule called Assembly, where each period meets for a shorter amount of time to accommodate a school event that day.

You must first set up attendance conversions and commit your master schedule to properly calculate attendance. If you set up bell schedules and then re-commit a

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master schedule, the bell schedules do not have a reference to the schedule periods. Without this reference, you cannot take attendance.

School Calendar

When you set up the school calendar, designate what days school is in session, what day type is associated for each day (A day or B day), and what bell schedule is associated with each day (Regular or Assembly).

Before you can set up the school calendar, you must set up years and terms, commit to a master schedule, and set up attendance conversions and bell schedules.

Attendance Process

If a parent or guardian calls the school office prior to the start of school to report an absence, you can mark the student as absent before the teacher takes attendance. The teacher does not need to mark the student absent. When the office enters attendance, teachers cannot make any attendance changes for that record; therefore, the office must make any necessary changes.

In PowerSchool, you can enter meeting attendance, interval attendance, daily attendance, and time attendance.

Students' daily attendance records indicate their absences, tardies, and arrival and dismissal times for an entire school day.

Meeting and interval attendance share the same page. The primary difference between the two is that for meeting attendance, a student can have only one attendance record per period. For interval attendance, a student can have multiple attendance records per period, based on the specified interval. Interval attendance may not look any different from meeting attendance if the period length is less than or equal to the specified interval duration defined in Attendance Preferences.

Time attendance is a way of adding attendance values by entering total minutes or hours for a given day. It is often used to enter work experience or independent study hours.

Recording Meeting Attendance

To record meeting attendance, first select a student's record, and then click **Enter Attendance**. Change meeting attendance by choosing an attendance code then clicking in the appropriate cell. Click **Set All** under the date to change attendance for all periods for the day. After you make the changes, click **Submit**.

Recording Daily Attendance

To record daily attendance, search for and select a student, and then click **Attendance**. There are two choices at the top of the Attendance page: Daily and

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Meeting. On the Daily Attendance page, click the day of the week for the attendance change. Change the attendance code and click **Submit**. You can also record attendance from the Meeting page. There is one meeting designated as the daily attendance time, usually homeroom. When you enter attendance for that meeting, daily attendance is updated as well.

If you need to modify daily attendance, from the Daily Attendance page, click the day of the week for the attendance change. Complete the Time In and Time Out fields. PowerSchool then calculates the minutes the student has attended for the day.

Activity 5 – Mark a student absent

A student's mother called in and said her daughter has the flu. You need to mark her absent for today.

1. Select a female high school student whose last name starts with the same letter as yours
2. Click **Enter Attendance**
3. For Attendance Code, choose **Absent**
4. Click **Set All** under today's date, and then click **Submit**

Teachers Record Attendance

Teachers can take attendance through PowerTeacher. Since the teacher typically does not know the reason for a student's absence, you can limit which codes are available for the teachers to enter, typically only absent and tardy. To set up teacher attendance codes, click **School > Attendance Codes**. Click the code you want to edit. Choose **Yes** for "Teachers can assign" to make the code available for teachers in PowerTeacher. If more specific codes are necessary after the reason for the absence is determined, the attendance staff makes the changes.

PowerTeacher Attendance Report

Before you run the Absentee Report, run the PowerTeacher Attendance Report to verify that all teachers have taken attendance. To run the report, click **Reports > PowerTeacher Attendance**. Select the date and periods to view which teachers have not yet submitted attendance. You can then contact teachers whose names appear on the report and remind them to take attendance.

You can also use the Teacher Attendance Submission Status report to view a progress indicator for all the teachers at your school. Red indicators mean attendance has not been submitted. Green indicators mean attendance has been submitted. Yellow indicators mean attendance has been submitted, but not for all classes. This indicator is great for a quick glance at the overall attendance

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submission progress. For more information, click a teacher's overall indicator to view individual indicators for each class.

Verifying Attendance

After all teachers have taken attendance, you can run the Absentee Report to generate a single-day period-by-period attendance code report. To run the report, on the Start Page click **Attendance > Absentee Report**. Depending on your school policy, you might call parents or guardians of students who are absent, but not excused. Once you verify the reason for the student's absence, you can update the student's attendance page by clicking the student's name on the Absentee Report and navigating to the Enter Attendance page. You can also use the Counselor's Screen to access student pages. The section below gives information on working with the Counselor's Screen.

Activity 6 – Run the Absentee Report and change a student's attendance

High school teachers have submitted their attendance, and now you need to find out who has been marked absent from class. Run the Absentee Report.

1. On the main menu, click **Attendance > Absentee Report**
2. For Students to Include, select **All**
3. For Attendance Codes, click **A (Absent)**
4. In the Date to Scan field, use the default (current) date
5. For "Period(s) (leave blank for all)" select **1**
6. Click **Submit**
7. Click **Refresh** next to Report Queue – My Jobs
8. When the Status is Completed, click **View** to open the report

As you are viewing the Absentee Report and making phone calls to parents, one of the students whose name is on the list walks into the office. Change the student's attendance from absent to tardy using the Absentee Report.

9. Click the name of a student on the Absentee Report
10. Click **Enter Attendance**
11. Choose **T (Tardy)** from the Current attendance code menu
12. Click in one period for today's date to change the code to T
13. Click **Submit**

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Working with the Counselor's Screen

The Absentee Report lists students' home phone numbers. Sometimes the parents cannot be contacted at home during the day, so you need to call their work phone number. You can use the Counselor's Screen to view a student page containing additional contact information for a group of students. You can access the Counselor's Screen from the Absentee Report. On the bottom of the report, click **Functions > Counselor's Screen**. For "Which screen would you like to use to view the list of students," choose **Demographics** and then click **Submit**. The names of the students who are on the Absentee Report appear on the left. Click a student's last name to view the student's Demographics page and find parents' work numbers. Move to the next student's Demographic page by clicking on the last name of the next student.

Updating Attendance

You can also use the Counselor's Screen to update attendance. On the bottom of the Absentee Report, click **Functions > Counselor's Screen**. (Alternatively, click **Student Selection** in the breadcrumb and then select **Counselor's Screen** from the Group Functions menu.) This time, for "Which screen would you like to use to view the list of students," choose **Attendance**, and then click **Submit**. The names of the students who are on the Absentee Report appear on the left. Click a student's last name to open the student's Attendance page. You can now modify current or future attendance. After you change the attendance, click **Submit**. Then select the next student's last name from the list on the left.

Entering Future Attendance

For a single student

Select a student, and then click **Attendance > Change Meeting Attendance**. On the Attendance Change page, enter the date range and the periods (meetings) to change. Select a code or codes to search for in the "Codes to Scan for" list (the default is All codes). Select a code from the "Attendance code to set" menu. The attendance codes you scan for will be replaced by the attendance code you choose from the "Attendance code to set" menu. Then click **Submit**.

For a group of students

Select a group of students. Then, from the Group Functions menu below the student list, choose **Attendance Change**. On the Attendance Change page, enter the date range and the periods (meetings) to change. Select a code or codes to search for in the "Codes to Scan for" list (the default is All codes). Select a code from the "Attendance code to set" menu. Then click **Submit**.

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Activity 7 – Record future attendance

A group of high school students are going on a field trip to Washington D.C. next week, so you need to set their attendance to “Field Trip” for Tuesday through Friday.

1. Select a group of students
2. From the list of Functions below the student list, choose **Attendance Change**
3. Enter dates for Tuesday through Friday
4. For “Meetings to scan,” click **Select All**
5. For “Code(s) to scan for,” click **Present**
6. For “Attendance Code to Set,” choose **F (Field Trip)**
7. Click **Submit**
8. Search for several students and verify that the attendance was changed