

Open Administration for Schools 15

Attendance Documentation

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Contents

The Attendance System	1
Attendance Entry Methods	2
Attendance Entry - Admin	2
Check Teacher Attendance Entry	3
Attendance Editing - Admin	3
Check Student Attendance	4
Course Based Attendance	5
Monthly/Term Reports	5
Other Attendance Reports	6
Attendance Information Storage - Technical	7
Other Table Structures	8
Teacher Attendance	9
Attendance Entry and Login	9
Attendance Editing	11
Attendance Reporting	11

The Attendance System

The attendance system is based around tracking student **absences**, since there should be fewer of them than **presences**. An attendance record is stored for a student only when they are absent (or late) from school. No record is stored when they are present. This is the easiest approach in terms of record entry. This system is also designed to accomodate the problems of K-12 schools that may have different attendance periods per day for different grades. (K-6 may have 2 attendance periods per day (Morning and Afternoon) while 7-12 have 6 periods per day, that correspond to teaching periods).

As a result, we have two attendance methods that may be used for a grade. One is called **Homeroom** and is typically used for K-8 schools. The homeroom teacher enters the attendance and typically we have two attendance periods per day (am/pm). Subject specialists such

as second language teachers and phys-ed teachers would not enter any attendance for those homeroom attendance grades.

The second method is called **Subject** and is used by high school grades where students have a variety of teachers and courses. Each course teacher would enter attendance for his/her course.

These methods are configured at the start of the year and should not be changed.

Besides entering student attendance records, these scripts also will add a **teacher attendance record** to indicate that the teacher has entered attendance for that date/period. Otherwise, there is no way to know if all students are present (**perfect attendance**) or the teacher just forgot to enter their attendance.

The attendance record contains:

- The **Date** and the **Period** of the absence.
- The local **Student Number** of the student.
- The text **Reason** for the absence.
- The **Subject-Section** of a course for subject based attendance and the **Homeroom** for homeroom attendance.
- A Late field to track minutes late (little used).

The teacher attendance record contains:

- The **Date** and the **Period** of the teacher entry.
- The **Teacher User Id**.
- The **Course Code** or the **Homeroom**

The teacher attendance record is added by all attendance scripts when an absence is recorded and also when there is **Perfect Attendance**.

Attendance Entry Methods

Attendance is normally entered by the teacher of the course/homeroom. It may also be entered by the secretary if a substitute teacher is present. The attendance entry approach depends on the school policies.

On the main admin site, administration staff may enter attendance for a teacher either for a single day or a week. Each grade is set to an attendance entry method; either homeroom or course/subject. The entry scripts on the attendance page under the **Add Attendance** section will display the matching options, as below.

Attendance Entry - Admin

There are two general types of attendance entry. One is a single day entry system and the other is a weekly entry system for either homeroom or course/subject.

The first script/button, called **Single Day**, lists teachers for homeroom attendance in the top section and then teachers for courses in the next section. Once you select a teacher you may enter his/her students absent for that day.

The second **Weekly**, or **Multiple Day Attendance** entry, is used to enter attendance on a weekly or biweekly (2 week) basis. This may be done in smaller elementary schools where each teacher is effectively in charge of attendance entry. They will fill in a weekly or biweekly form and then the secretary keys in this information. This method is designed for that kind of entry.

There is a separate button for attendance whether homeroom or subject/course methods are set for particular grades.

For Homeroom attendance, the starting date, the homeroom, and the time periods (Weekly/Biweekly) must be chosen first, and then the following page will show the students and the dates/periods for absence entry.

The Course Attendance entry method requires the user to select the teacher first so that his/her timetable may be used to find the courses, dates and periods for entry. This is an additional step compared to the homeroom method.

Once entered, the periods missed by students may be clicked (selected). Previous or the Next Week may be chosen by clicking the appropriate button. The next screen will allow selecting the reason for the absence.

Check Teacher Attendance Entry

When attendance is done by teachers is done daily, a method is required to make sure all attendance has been entered by teachers before reports are generated.

There are several reports available to check this:

1. **Homeroom Absence Report** will show, after setting an end date, each homeroom teacher and their entries ordered by date, period.
2. **Course Absence Report** after setting the end date, displays the teacher, course, and periods missed.
3. **Current Check** will check for teachers who haven't done attendance today.
4. **Teacher Attendance Report** will allow you to select a starting month, and the number of months to report on. It will then give weekly results for each of the teachers.

One of the fields in the staff screen (on EOY page) is **Does Attendance**. For all teachers that have this field set to *Yes*, this program checks to make sure that they have entered an

attendance record for today. If there is perfect attendance, a blank entry (no one selected), should still be made to create a *Teacher Did the Attendance* entry (which is stored in the teacher attendance table).

Attendance Editing - Admin

This section has options to edit or delete existing attendance records. These include:

- **Edit** allows you to edit today or previous day attendance. You can also select a date range to edit using the calendar popup. You can also edit a single student with his/her local student number or initials or name.

For the date range, make sure that all dates are entered in year-month-day format. Use the calendar popup which will allow date entry (double click) (and generates the correct entry format).

Once you have the attendance records displayed, you can edit or delete any individual records desired. If you have many records to delete the *Power Delete* function is more appropriate (whose button is located further down the page).

- **View** allows viewing of attendance by student, date range, or course/homeroom.
- **Reason Reset** – this enables the resetting of all reasons for attendance for one day in one simple operation (rather than editing individual records using the functions mentioned above).
- **Power Delete** – this enables the rapid deletion of a large number of attendance records entered by mistake. This can happen as teachers are learning to use the system. Make sure that that date (if not today) is entered in correct format (if entering manually).
- **Move Course Records** – can move one or more students attendance records to a different course code. This doesn't move the student into a new course, but just gives improved reporting.
- **Check Attendance Records** – Periodically you should click this button in order to check for duplicate attendance records (same date, period, and student), blank reasons and blank dates. This will ensure data integrity of the attendance records. The new attendance entry methods should trap most of these mistakes in current versions of OA.
- **Check Attendance Outside of Enrollment** - sometimes a student is withdrawn from school, and the teacher continues to mark him/her as absent. This script will find those incorrect records and remove them.

Check Student Attendance

These are a variety of attendance reports.

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- **Daily Attendance Report** The user selects a single date and all students absent/late will be reported including their previous weekly attendance and any discipline events. This attempts to try to give a snapshot of this student, so that administrators can pick out any growing attendance problems (particularly combined with discipline issues).
 - **Late Report** This report will show lates for a date range. It will include counts of student lates and total minutes late for the date range.
 - **Simple Scan** This report scans a date range for absences and a maximum number of days absent in order to find chronic attendance problems.
 - **Complex Scan** This is more sophisticated report for finding attendance problems.

Every attendance reason can be assigned a *point* value in the configuration file and when the points accumulate to certain *trigger values*, a discipline event may be recorded and form letters may be automatically generated. For example, an unexcused absence might be 3 points while an unexcused late might be 1 point. Other reasons could be set to 0. When points accumulate to configured values (ie. 20), a letter might go home to the parents. The settings would be set based on school policy.

The settings for these **points** and **trigger values** and their matching **discipline events** is set in the main configuration file (admin.conf). These can be seen from the Eoy page using the View Configuration files button.

This scans a single date or date range It adds up the points in that range. (ie. today or this week, etc). It then compares this to previous points totals and looks for any values that would go over a trigger point.

These triggered events generate a check box selection so that the attendance officer may select (possibly all) students for discipline action. When selected and submitted, a discipline entry is created and form letters are also generated for printing, signing, and mailing. These form letters are based on templates that may be edited by your system administrator.

- **Scan 2** This report looks for percentage attendance and displays a color coded page of students and their attendance.

Course Based Attendance

For high schools, attendance is usually tracked also on a *per course* basis. The following two reports are used to track this:

- **Student** – displays all the classes missed sorted by course.
- **Course** – displays a listing by course, with student and number of classes missed.

Monthly/Term Reports

- **Report 1** – will report on student attendance for a selected month. One option prints a web based (html) report, while the other outputs a pdf (Adobe Acrobat) report more suitable for printing. The web report will highlight withdrawn students in red. Both reports categorize attendance into 5 categories: Absent Unexcused, Absent Excused, Absent Other, Late Unexcused, and Late Excused. The Absent Other category is a *catch all* for all categories of *Absent Something or Other* that the school has added.
- **Report 2** – is a First Nation/ISC report where you enter a date in the month and will allow splitting of reporting when FN of student changes.
- **Report 3** – is a summative report by grade and month for percentage attendance.
- **Report 4** – is a detailed monthly homeroom/course report that includes missing attendance entries. It produces a listing including Days Enrolled and Days Attended, and percentage stats for the categories listed above. It allows grouping of students by Class or Grade. It produces a listing of grand totals at the bottom of the report (with a link at the top to jump directly to those totals). It is the most complex report of the four above and the most used.
- **Homeroom** – is a summative report of homeroom attendance.
- **Present** – a report to show students present for a particular month.

Other Attendance Reports

- **Daily Report** – a date range attendance report in html format.
- **Attendance Phone List** – a phone list report for those students missing on that day. Used by people responsible for attendance checking (ie. attendance officer).
- **Yearly Student Report** – a report selects multiple months, and grade/homerooms with an override for K/PK grades.
- **Student Profiles** is a comprehensive PDF report that draws data from the attendance table as well as the transfer table (for enrollments and withdrawals) and summarizes this information on one (or more) pages. It will report on all students, *including withdrawn students*. This kind of attendance report may be used by schools not using the report card system, but would like to include attendance information to parents and guardians. It is designed for printing since it is a PDF (Adobe Acrobat) report. Normally the date range chosen for reporting would be the range of dates for the current report card period (ie. term).

The report card attendance information includes attendance information in terms of days missed (absences and lates). It will also report on periods missing for subject attendance). It does not include transfer (enroll/withdraw) information. As a result, the attendance profile is a more comprehensive source for attendance information. The Online parent site also provides comprehensive attendance information (as well as gradebook and report card marks).

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- **Cohort Report** – reports on student retention and their length of stay in the school.
 - **Perfect Attendance** – A report on students with perfect attendance. You select a date range and those attendance reasons to skip over.
 - **Year End Attendance Report** is a PDF report similar to the Attendance Profiles, but created in a more compact format for longer term storage, etc. It contains all information on attendance for the year for the school.
 - **Year End Attendance 2 - Homeroom** – A PDF report for year end for a particular homeroom, selected on the start page.
 - **Year End Attendance 3 - Courses** – A PDF report for year end for a particular grade with course attendance reporting.
 - **Ethnic Attendance Report** – categorizes attendance records on the basis of the ethnic field of the students. It is a summary report and includes Students Enrolled in the date range chosen, Student-Days Absent, Student-Days Enrolled and Percentage Attendance (for each ethnic group).
 - **Follow Your Voices SDS Attendance Export** – export student attendance from current or previous years in a format for spreadsheet analysis.
 - **Attendance / Credits Earned** – is a report that shows the relationship between attendance and student attainment in credits earned.
 - **Statistical Attendance - Current (or Previous)** – generates a statistical report for all students either in HTML (web page) or CSV (spreadsheet) format.

Attendance Information Storage - Technical

The **Attend** table is the primary table that stores information about attendance (really absence), the periods missed by students. If there are two periods per day (am/pm), and the student missed the entire day, then there are two records added to the table. A 6 period day would result in 6 records added if the student missed all day.

The attendance table (*attend*) has the following fields:

1. **Studnum** – the local student number of the missing student. (called studentid in this table... a mistake). The student number (studnum) field in the student table links the student name, etc. directly to the attendance record by this field.
2. **Absdate** – the date of the absence (or late). The reason, below, will outline the reason for the absence or late. Like all stored dates, this is in ISO 8601 standard year-month-day format (most significant to least).
3. **Period** – the period of the absence. For a 1 period school day, this would be all day. For a two period attendance day, this would be morning or afternoon, (1 or 2). The periods per day for each grade are stored in the master configuration file (admin.conf). In a K-12

school, the elementary students may be using a 2 period attendance day (AM/PM) while the high school uses a 5 or 6 period day. As a result, when an elementary student is absent all day, only 2 records are stored. If a high school student on a 6 period day is missing all day, 6 records are stored.

4. **Subject-section** – for schools doing Subject/Course based attendance entry, this is the subject-section code of the period missed. (ie. 8514-1) This will allow tracking of classes missed in any particular course (ie.subject-section). For **Homeroom** attendance, this field will contain **HR:homeroom** where the 'homeroom' text is the homeroom of the student. The type of attendance entry, homeroom or subject, is configured for each grade.
5. **Reason** – the reason for the absence or late. The reasons are stored in the configuration system also. The reason should include the text *Absent* in the reason in order for some of the programs to correctly count the number of absences for accurate reports. The same is true for the *Late* reasons. Only the reasons located in the configuration file may be entered since they are chosen from a selection list. A smaller list rather than a larger one may be better, since each must have some sort of justification in policy.

The **Absent** reasons can be classified into several categories (and are printed this way in the monthly attendance reports):

- (a) Absent Unexcused - self explanatory.
- (b) Absent Medical, Absent Illness, Absent Cultural - excused absences for particular reasons (and that need tracking)
- (c) Absent Excused - an excused absence with no particular need to be tracked for a reason. (ie. Cows got out and had to go get them...)

The **Late** reasons are not categorized other than being excused or unexcused (although, of course, this may be changed).

6. **Late** – a numeric field storing, normally, the number of minutes late.

Other Table Structures

Open Admin has, besides the **attend** table, the following tables supporting attendance:

tattend table – A table to make sure teachers have entered their attendance. A single record is added every time a teacher adds one or more attendance records (to the attend table). The office can then tell that all attendance has been entered for the day (or portion of the day), and that attendance reports can be run.

The fields of this table include:

- **attid** - int(11) - the record number; used to edit/delete.
- **attdate** - date - the date for which attendance entry was done. (not necessarily the current date).
- **currdate** - datetime - the actual date/time of the entry, possibly days later.

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- *userid* - char(20) - the teacher userid (from the *staff* table) (which is why each teacher must have a *userid*).
 - *subjects* - The course's subjsec or the homeroom preceded by 'HR:'.
 - *periods* - the period the attendance is entered for. Only a single value.

Teacher Attendance Entry requires support from the *staff* table to indicate which teachers are actually responsible for entering attendance. There are a couple of important fields:

- *Position* – shows their role in the school (teachers, aides, principal, etc.)
- *Attenry* (Does Attendance) – indicates that this person is responsible for attendance entry.

Teacher Attendance

The attendance buttons allow teachers to enter attendance records, change these records (if desired), and print reports on the attendance of their homeroom or courses.

Attendance Entry and Login

In order to do attendance, each teacher must have a userid and password set in the staff records. This is set by the secretary/administrator on the main admin site. All teachers must have a unique userid and password.

When you login, one of your options is the *duration*. This is the length of time that you have to enter your attendance before your login *times out* and will require you to log in again. This length of time is **reset** while you are actively working on attendance every time you do a submission, etc.

Once you are done with your attendance entry you may exit your web browser (Firefox, Chrome, etc) or Log Out so that no one else may change your attendance (or other values).

Student Attendance Entry - Term 3

Teacher Att Entries

UserID	Date
123	2006-01-23 00:00:00

Previous Attendance Entries

[Edit Attendance](#)

Name	Date/Per
Cyr, ERic	2006-03-03/1
Cyr, ERic	2006-03-03/2
Cyr, ERic	2006-03-02/1
Cyr, ERic	2006-03-02/2
Cyr, ERic	2006-03-01/1
Cyr, ERic	2006-03-01/2
Cyr, ERic	2006-02-28/1
Cyr, ERic	2006-02-28/2
Flintstone, Pebbles	2006-02-28/1
Cyr, ERic	2006-02-27/1
Cyr, ERic	2006-02-27/2
Flintstone, Pebbles	2006-02-27/1
Flintstone, Pebbles	2006-02-27/2

Enter Checks and Reasons for Students Missing **ONLY**
Time Limit **15 Minutes**

[<= Previous Week](#) [Next Week =>](#)

Date(dow, yy-mm-dd): [Mon, 2006-2-27](#)

Teacher: **Ms. Joe Blow** Room: **123**

Student		AM	PM	Reason
Cyr, ERic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent Unexcused	
Flintstone, Pebbles Sandy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent Illness	
Holman, Shawn Christopher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent Moved	
Lilly, Lyle L.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent Moved	
quinn, michael leroy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Absent Illness	
Sample, Joseph A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Santos, Dilbania	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

There are two **attendance entry methods** for that are set in configuration for each grade in your school. They are:

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- **Homeroom Attendance** – Typically done in elementary schools where students are mainly taught by one teacher. The homeroom teacher does this attendance only. Subject specialists (ie. PhysEd, Language) **do not** enter attendance for homerooms.
 - **Course/Subject Attendance** – Typically done in the upper grades where students move from room to room and the Course teacher enters attendance for their course. As a result, the number of courses per day will be the same as the number of attendance records each day.

The attendance method is set separately for each grade.

When you click on **Enter Attendance** you are presented with 4 choices:

- **Homeroom Attendance** – You can set a default absence reason for your entry, and also by selecting 'Check All', all missing attendance reasons on the next page will be selected. The second page will display your students with options for the attendance periods they have missed and the reason for that. The **Perfect Attendance** line is used when all students are present and it indicates that you have done the attendance. Without filling in perfect attendance, it will not be clear whether you have actually done attendance for that day/period.
- **Weekly Attendance - Homeroom** will allow you to do attendance for an entire week, rather than just a single day. You could also do attendance for 2 weeks if desired. With this method, the next page allows you to select the dates and periods for absences, and the following page allows you to set the absence reasons.
- **Course Attendance Entry** – this method is used by high school teachers (where attendance entry for the grade is set to 'Course/Subject') to enter subject specific attendance. This information includes the student, period, subject, and reason. It will list all of the courses that a teacher has in the current term and the students in each.
The non-homeroom teacher must have a timetable entered in the timetable system, so that his/her day will be displayed with only those subjects that he/she teaches today. As well, they will have the correct periods for those courses only.
- **Course Attendance - Weekly** – similar to the course entry method, but provides for a weekly entry of attendance. Not really recommended, due to the errors that teachers' memory/recording may have.

There are several features to note about the entry screen:

- The current date of entry is displayed in large type. The buttons above the date will allow you to change the entry to a day in this week. Above that you can go to the next or previous weeks.
The course attendance entry method uses the same layout for dates and then displays the courses in period order.
- The am/pm or period checkboxes enter the period(s) missed. The pulldown reason box is used to enter the reason for absence or lateness. The reasons are stored in a configuration file for the school. They can easily be changed to suit the school's needs.

They are generally categorized into Absences: Unexcused, Excused for a variety of reasons, or Excused (no reason). Unexcused absences will generally trigger some sort of discipline event (using the Attendance Scan function), while the other reasons are more for tracking by staff (and parents). Lateness tracking is similar.

View Attendance Status – This script is used to view all of the dates that a teacher has entered his/her attendance. It allows multiple months and breaks entries down by weeks.

Set PK/K Non-school Days - since PK/K grades may not come on regular days as the rest of the school, their teachers will have to set the days that those grades are **not** in school. They do this by selecting the month and the homeroom involved. Any mistakes here, will affect attendance reporting so care must be take.

Attendance Editing

There are two general methods for editing student attendance:

- **Homeroom Attendance** will automatically select those students in your homeroom, and display them in descending order. Beside that you have the months of attendance to select. The combinations are outlined by the script.
- **Course Attendance** will automatically display all courses in a table, and then the months of attendance on the right. The script will display the results of your combination of courses and months as the homeroom editing options based on your choices.

Attendance Reporting

There are two ways of looking at student attendance:

1. **Monthly 4** – This is the most complex report and shows monthly attendance for students. The first page allows you to select the month(s), and the Homerooms/Course Grades. There are various overrides to give you more options.

The second page displays the students (one row per student) and the days of the months in columns. Various values are in each cell of the table. You can hover on any cell to see more details about the attendance.

2. **Monthly 1** – is a statistical report on attendance by attendance reasons for a particular month, with one or more grades or homerooms.
3. **Group Attendance** – This allows you to look at attendance by either *grade* or *homeroom*. You may also enter a date range to select for only particular dates. If the dates are left blank then all attendance records from the start of the school year to the present are displayed. By selecting a later start date you may see only more recent records.
4. **Search** – allows you to search for a particular student's attendance records (really absence records). Using initials is a fast method.

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5. **Yearly Student Report** – a yearly report (or multiple months) showing attendance for a particular homeroom or grade.
 6. **Year End Register** – a year end report for homerooms, in PDF format.
 7. **Entry Check - Courses** – a report to check for missing teacher attendance entries based on his/her courses. The first page limits the search up to a certain point (by default the current date).
 8. **Entry Check - Courses** – a report to check for missing teacher entries, based on their homeroom, rather than courses.