

SAINT PETER'S PREP

NEW JERSEY'S JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL SINCE 1872

POWERSCHOOL FOR PARENTS HANDBOOK

Welcome to Saint Peter's Prep's **PowerSchool for Parents** handbook. This information will help you get started using PowerSchool. **PowerSchool for Parents** can help you take a more active role in your son's education.

Purpose of PowerSchool

PowerSchool is an advanced Student Information System used by schools across the country. Its functions include grading, attendance, and the scheduling of courses, teachers and students. PowerSchool is capable of allowing parents and students to access student grades and attendance in real time. The purpose of this feature is to increase communication and collaboration among parents, students, and teachers. While it gives parents and guardians more information about their child's education, at the same time it encourages students to take increased ownership of their learning.

Corresponding with Teachers

Part I - Grading Systems and Posting of Grades

Prep purchased the PowerSchool Software as a more advanced student information system for scheduling, grading and attendance and as a useful tool to increase communication among parents, students, and teachers. We are excited about the potential of this new technology, but realize that with this tool also comes a paradigm shift. The teachers and staff at St. Peter's Prep have spent numerous hours training on PowerSchool and continue to learn how to use the program to its full potential.

We believe that, along with teachers, it is also important for parents to become educated in the process of grades and assessment. Before PowerSchool, parents received grade information only upon request or at scheduled times – progress reports, end of each quarter and end of each semester. With PowerSchool, it will now be possible for parents to check grade information more frequently. With that in mind, it is important for parents to consider the following:

1. Each teacher has his or her own grading system. Some teachers work on a straight "total points" system while others weight the scores according to assignment categories (tests, quizzes, etc.). One teacher may give a grade for class participation; another teacher may not accept late work. Our teachers inform all of their students of their expectations and grading policies for the class at the beginning of the course. We recommend parents familiarize themselves with this information for clarification. Many teachers will have listed their grading policy on the **Class Score Detail** screen.

2. Grades can change dramatically in the first few weeks of each marking period, or after a large test or assignment. In the beginning of each marking period, you may see dramatic shifts in the class average of your son. The reason is simply that when there are only one or two assignments in the grade book, a low or high score can have a dramatic effect on the overall grade.

3. Teachers need time to grade essays, projects, assignments and tests. Each day teachers are expected to have new material and lesson plans ready for class. Many teachers are also involved in co-curricular activities that take time to plan and attend. With that in mind, teachers need ample time to review assignments thoroughly. For example, a teacher will not be able to post grades for an essay assignment the next day when he or she has 25 students in each of his or her classes. **We have asked our teachers to have all major tests and project grades entered into PowerSchool within two weeks of their due date, and minor quiz, assignment and project grades entered within a week of their due date.** Please be patient as grading does take time.

To help in communication, teachers are encouraged to use codes in their gradebooks, some of which are as follows:

I = Incomplete

*= Assignment is not included in final grade.

^=Score is exempt from final grade.

1=The final grade may include assignments that are not yet published by the teacher. It may also be the result of special weighting used by the teacher.

Part II - Before you email or call a teacher . . .

When Prep decided to purchase PowerSchool as our new student information system, one of our goals was to enhance collaboration among parents, students, and teachers; however, we recognize the potential for numerous phone calls and emails from parents who have visited PowerSchool and are confused by grades or other information they see on their son's pages. If you are concerned by a grade you see on PowerSchool, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. **Talk with your son first.** Remember that our shared goal is to use PowerSchool to aid your son in taking greater responsibility for his progress, not to eliminate his accountability for his work. Ask your son what the situation is with his grade(s). If he is not sure, please send him to talk with the teacher for clarification. A parent-teacher conversation should not take place before a parent-student conversation and a student-teacher conversation have first occurred.

2. **Read the grading philosophy and policies of the teacher.** This may explain how the assignments add up to the current average. You can find the policy by clicking on any grade under *Class Score Detail*.

page. Check the assignment list to see if the assignment description is listed in the *Class Score Detail* page. Keep in mind

that these are designed to help students understand what was involved in or expected for a particular assignment.

4. **Check the date of the assignment.** An assignment handed in late may receive deductions from its score. Also, early in the marking period grades can fluctuate dramatically because of the small number of assignments in the grade book.

5. In trying to clarify a **class average**, review the details to see if there are any missing or late assignments that could be affecting the overall grade average.

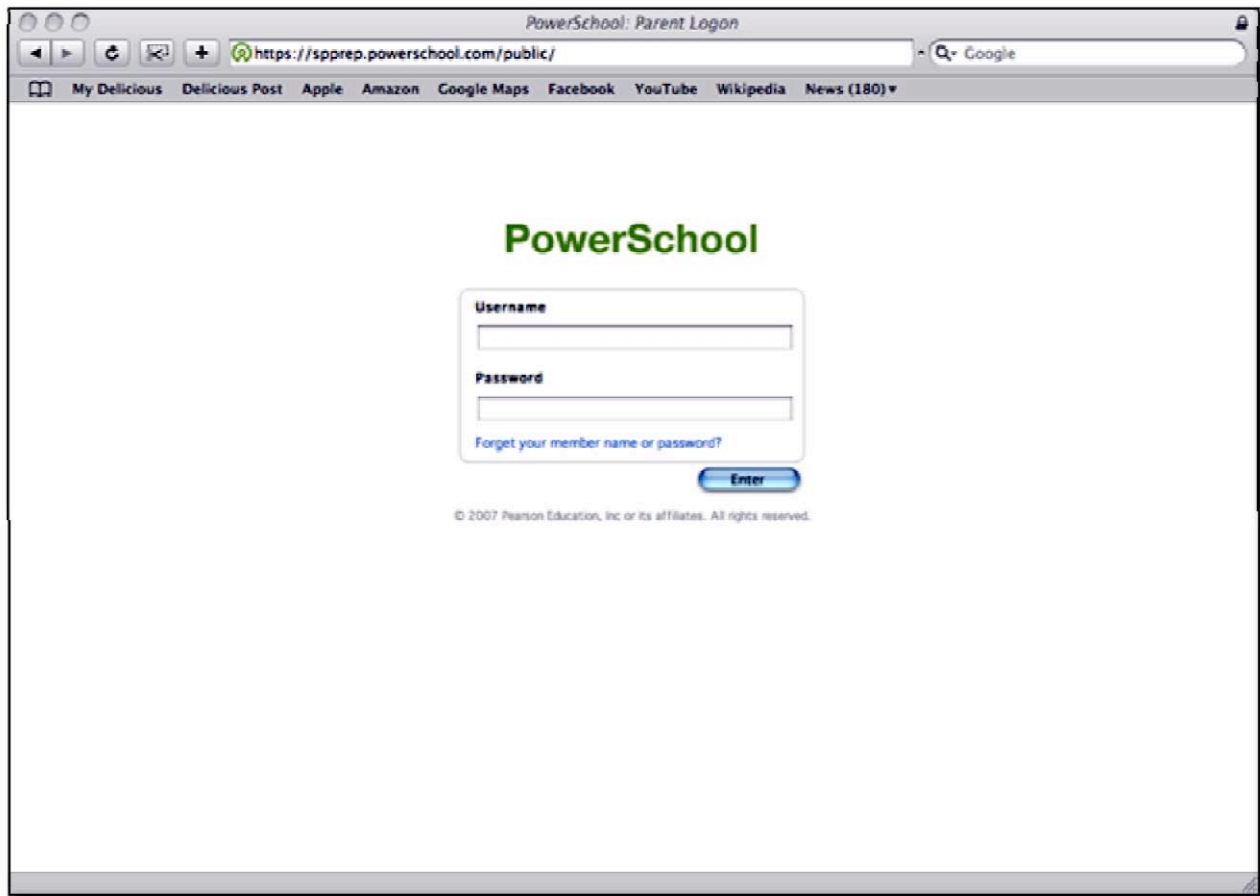
6. **After following the steps above**, if you still have questions, click on the teacher's name to send an email to ask the teacher to help clarify the situation. When sending an email to a teacher, it is advisable to use an email address with a valid sounding name. A teacher who receives a message from hamandcheese@yahoo.com might ignore the message thinking that it is junk mail. Prep has an aggressive spam blocker that blocks thousands of emails each day. It is also important to include your son's name in the subject line of your emails. Please remember that issues and/or questions that are personal in nature should be handled by meeting with the teachers personally.

7. Please remember that **grades are fluid** and can change dramatically over time.

8. Assigning grades to student work and evaluations is only a small part of the learning process and often does not capture the big picture of what is happening with the student in the class. For this reason, we encourage parents to **work with their son** on what he is learning, not just on the grades he is earning.

Logging In To PowerSchool:

1. Make sure you are connected to the Internet. (For help with connecting to the Internet, contact your Internet Service Provider)
2. Open an Internet browser. (i.e. Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator or FireFox, Safari, etc.)
3. Access Prep's PowerSchool server:
 - A. Go to Prep's website [http:// www.spprep.org/](http://www.spprep.org/) and click on the PowerSchool link found under "School Life."
 - B. Or, you can access PowerSchool directly at: <http://spprep.powerschool.com/>
4. A login page will appear (very similar to below):



The image shows a screenshot of a web browser window titled "PowerSchool: Parent Logon". The address bar displays "https://spprep.powerschool.com/public/". The browser's toolbar includes navigation buttons and a search bar with "Google". Below the toolbar, there are several bookmarked sites: My Delicious, Delicious Post, Apple, Amazon, Google Maps, Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, and News (180). The main content area of the browser displays the PowerSchool login page. At the top, the word "PowerSchool" is written in a large, green, bold font. Below this, there is a login form with two input fields: "Username" and "Password". Below the password field is a link that says "Forget your member name or password?". At the bottom of the form is a blue button labeled "Enter". Below the form, there is a small copyright notice: "© 2007 Pearson Education, Inc or its affiliates. All rights reserved."

5. Type in the username that was provided in the letter mailed to parents.
6. Type in the password that was provided in the letter.
7. Click on the "Enter" button

Note: Please remember, when you are done in PowerSchool, log off from the site. Do this by clicking on the Log Out button, which is available on all pages.

If you have questions or comments, please email powerschoolhelp@spprep.org.

Available Features of PowerSchool

Grades and Attendance

Provides access to a summary of your son's current grades and attendance at one glance.

Attendance History

Provides access to the complete attendance record for your son for the current term.

Grades History

Provides access to your son's current year report card with current term grades.

Email Notification

Provides access to automatic email notification configuration. Use this tool to receive periodical emails with your son's grade and attendance information.

Teacher Comments

Provides access to each teacher's current comments for your son. Teachers are expected to use this feature at the end of cycles two and four.

My Calendars

This allows parents and students to subscribe to calendars for the school and individual classes. This requires use of specific calendaring software. See the PowerSchool website for more information. This is an upcoming more advanced feature and not an expectation of teachers at this time.

Grades & Attendance

The *Grades & Attendance* page is the default page when you log in to PowerSchool. This page gives you a quick look at how your son is performing in school. From this screen, you have access to attendance information for the previous two weeks, names and email links to teachers, current grade averages and attendance totals for the current term.

Key Concept in PowerSchool: Anytime you see something in blue, it is a link to more information.

There are three different locations on this page where this is available:

1. **Teacher's Name** – If you click on it, you are able to email that teacher (**Note: you must have your email settings set correctly for this to work. This works with Outlook and other client applications, but does not work automatically with all webmail**).
2. **Attendance Totals** – Anytime you see a number in the attendance columns listed in blue, you can click on it for more specific information about that absence or tardy.
3. **Class Averages** – You will notice that the score below the grades is listed in blue. By clicking on that number you will display the *Class Score Detail* page (seen below).

Exp	Last Week					This Week					Course	Q1	Q2	S1	Q3	Q4	S2	Absences	Tardies
	M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F									
HR(A-G)											HOMEROOM † Settembrino, Michael				--	--	--	1	0
1(A-G)											CHEMISTRY HONORS † Lagerstrom, David F.	95	88	88	82	--	82	1	0
2(A-G)											ENGLISH 2 HONORS † Groark, Julie	96	97	95	87	--	87	1	0
3(A-G)											ITALIAN 1 † Romano, Rosalie	98	90	93	83	--	83	1	0
4(B,D)											PHYSICAL EDUCATION 2 † Hansen, Richard C.				--	--	--	1	0
5(A-F)											THE NEW TESTAMENT † Dwyer, Jonathan	94	92	92	81	--	81	1	0
6(A-G)											LATIN 2 HONORS † Burokas, David	91	90	90	86	--	86	1	0
7(A-G)											GEOMETRY HONORS † Urbanovich, Joseph	96	83	90	86	--	86	1	0
											SOPHOMORE GUIDANCE † Mullin, S.J., John				--	--	--	0	0
Attendance Totals																	8	0	

Show dropped classes also

Class Score Detail Page:

The *Class Score Detail* page displays specific class assignment and grade information. As with the *Grade and Attendance* page, if you see something written in blue, it is a link to more information. The Assignment, Assignment Category and the Score all have the potential for more information. At the top of the page, you may also find grading information posted by the teacher. This can help you understand the class expectations, grading policies, and grading philosophies of the teacher for this particular class. Teachers are just beginning to explore this function.

Key Concept: If there is an assignment listed but there is no score – check the date. This may be an assignment that has been listed to make parents aware of an upcoming due date, or it may not yet be graded. Teachers will also use codes such as EX (Excused), AB (Student absent, still needs to make up) and NTI (Not Turned In, counts as zero) to convey information to parents.

Attendance History

The *Attendance History* page allows you to have a detailed view of your son's attendance in school for the current semester. At the bottom of the page, you'll find the legend for Prep attendance codes. Parents are encouraged to review the absence policy in the Prep Parent/Student handbook.

Grade History

The **Grade History** page allows you to view a list of all grades that your son has earned this school year. Essentially, this view acts as a report card screen. You are able to see the letter grade, percentage grade and the credits earned (after the semester is completed). Prep does not use the Citizenship feature of PowerSchool.

When accessing this page you will see the following tables:

Marking Period 1 (Q1)
Marking Period 2 (Q2)
Midterm Exams (E1)
Semester 1 (S1)

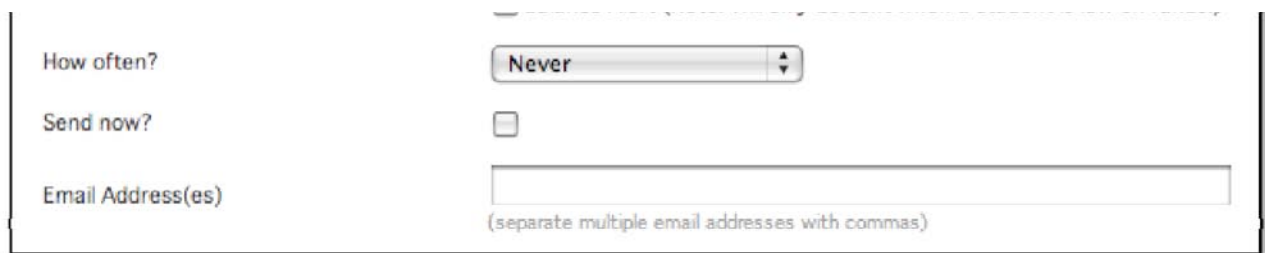
Marking Period 3 (Q3)
Marking Period 4 (Q4)
Final Exams (E2)
Semester 2 (S2)

Note: This page changes throughout the year as grades move from being “current” to “final.” Grades will not appear until after a marking period or exam period has concluded.

The percentage grades are listed in blue. Clicking one of these numbers will bring up the **Class Score Detail** showing the assignments and grades that made up that particular score.

Email Notification

The **Email Notification** page allows parents to set up an automatic email update to their personal email account. Parents will need to choose and submit their preferred settings.



The screenshot shows a form with three main sections:

- How often?**: A dropdown menu currently set to "Never".
- Send now?**: An unchecked checkbox.
- Email Address(es)**: A text input field with a placeholder instruction below it: "(separate multiple email addresses with commas)".

There are four areas that need to be defined for email notifications to begin.

The first item you need to configure is the type of information you want sent to you. You have five options to choose from.

(Note: The more you select, the more emails you will receive).

- o **Summary of current grades and attendance** - Sends out an email summary of current grade and attendance totals for each of your son's classes. *This is the option we most recommend for parents.*

- o **Detailed reports showing all assignment scores for each class** - Sends out one email for each class with each assignment and scores. (Note: if your son has 7 classes you will

receive 7 emails, one for each class. If you have multiple students at Prep you can be receiving over 14 emails with detailed information – for this reason, we are not recommending this option).

- o **Detailed report of attendance** - Sends out an email containing detailed attendance for each class your son is enrolled in for the current term.
- o **School announcements** –The school announcement link will take you directly to the weekly bulletin on the school’s website. Presently, this option is not recommended as an email reminder.
- o **Balance Alert** – Currently, Prep’s food service is handled independently of the school. As such, this function is not utilized at this time.

Once you have chosen the above options, you will need to configure the “How Often?” option of the notifications.

You have five options to choose from: Never, Once a Week, Once Every Two Weeks, Once a Month (recommended option), or Daily.

Note: Because grades do not change dramatically over a short span, we recommend that parents select the “Once Every Week” or “Once Every Two Weeks” option. Teachers will update grades every week or every two weeks, depending on the assignment (see p. 2).

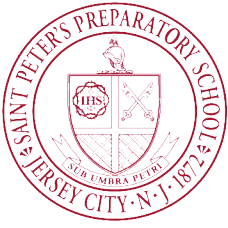
The next item, **Send Now**, allows you to have these emails sent to your email account now. At any time, you can return to this screen, check this box and click the submit button to have these emails sent. If **Send Now** is not checked, you will receive the next update according to the choices made above. The server sends out these updates automatically on Mondays.

Note: At any time you can return to this page and alter your choices. Changes will take effect upon clicking the Submit button.

Finally, you need to configure your email accounts. Type in the email address of the account to which you want emails sent. You can have these emails sent to multiple email accounts by simply separating the email accounts with commas (no spaces).

Teacher Comments

The *Teacher Comments* page allows you to view any comments that teachers may have submitted for your son. From here you are able to view your son's current schedule and teachers for each class. As with the *Grades and Attendance* screen, if a teacher has email available you can click the teacher’s name and send an email to him or her.



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POWERSCHOOL PARENT ACCESS USER AGREEMENT

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE

PowerSchool Parent Access is the means by which you will view your son's progress reports and report cards. PowerSchool Parent Access is intended for the sole purpose of providing parents/guardians with an internet portal through which they can obtain academic and attendance information for only their son.

Parents/Guardians will be given a user ID and password specific to their son. User IDs and passwords will be e-mailed to parents/guardians at the email address provided at the time of registration. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to protect the security of this user ID and password. Saint Peter's Preparatory School will accept no responsibility in the event this information is shared, given, stolen or in any other way becomes the possession of a person other than the parent/guardian. Inappropriate use of the parent access component of PowerSchool will result in loss of access.

Parents/Guardians should not share their personal user ID and password with their sons. Separate student access information will be provided to the student to view his grades and to perform online course registration.

I understand that by accepting a user ID and password and/or using the PowerSchool Parent Access Program, I agree to the terms and conditions of use set forth above.

Name of Son: _____ Class of _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please print) Parent/Guardian Signature

Date: _____