

PowerSchool

**Windham School District**  
***PowerSchool for Parents***  
**Parent Handbook**

Welcome to the Windham School District's **PowerSchool for Parents**. This information will get you started using PowerSchool. PowerSchool for Parents is easy to use and will allow you take a more active role in your child's education.

PowerSchool offers parents real-time access to grades, attendance and class information. You can even e-mail teachers or ask for automatic updates on your student's progress and view the school bulletin. The PowerSchool link is available anywhere in the world, just by logging into the Internet. All information is secure and information about your child is only available to you.

You must obtain your PowerSchool *username* and *password* from your child's school. You may pick up the information in person or have it mailed to you. For security reasons, we do not give out this information over the phone or by email.

To enter the PowerSchool program:

- You can log in to PowerSchool for Parents by using any web browser. Type this address in the address bar: <http://powerschool.windhamsd.org>

or

- Log onto the District's website at <http://www.windhamsd.org> and click on the **Powerschool - PowerSchool for Parents** link .
- On the PowerSchool login screen, enter your confidential user name. On the next line, type in the password exactly as it appears on your PowerSchool letter. Click the Enter button.

The image shows a login form for PowerSchool. At the top, the word "PowerSchool" is written in a blue, sans-serif font. Below it, there are two input fields: one for "Username" and one for "Password". Both fields are empty and have a light blue border. Below the password field, there is a link that says "Forget your member name or password?". At the bottom right of the form, there is a blue button with the word "Enter" written on it.

**Note:** Do not forget to Log Off when you are done in PowerSchool. Click on the **Log Out** button which is available in all screens.

#### **Tips and Items to Consider:**

- Blue words are hyperlinks. By clicking on them, you can find more detailed information.
- Keep your username and password in a safe place. Your password protects your information. Do not share it with anyone.
- Please be patient when waiting for grades to be submitted. It is not realistic to expect teachers to enter grades the same day an assignment is due. Grades will be posted within one week of their due date for all minor assignments and two weeks for all major projects and tests.
- Changes in your child's grade may seem to occur rapidly. The grade book instantly recalculates the overall grade based on every assignment entered. Please contact your child's teacher if you have concerns.
- Teachers use different grading techniques and policies. Please check with the teacher if you are unsure of the grading policy.

Once you've logged into PowerSchool, you will see a menu bar at the top of the screen. The default screen that appears is the Grades and Attendance screen.



**Here is a brief description of each option:**

- **Grades and Attendance** – Displays the current quarter grade, last week's and this week's attendance, and the current attendance totals for the year. You can access teacher comments and course descriptions from this screen.
- **Grades History** – Displays all previous grades for the current year.
- **Attendance History** – Displays attendance for the current year.
- **Email Notification** – Parents can request various email notifications.
- **Teacher Comments** - Displays all current teacher comments.
- **School Bulletin** – Displays school bulletin items/announcements.

## Grades and Attendance

On this screen, you will find a complete listing of all your student's classes, teachers, current grade averages and attendance information.

By clicking on the teacher's name, you can send an email to your child's teacher. Remember, your computer must be set up to send e-mails from your browser. Contact your Internet service provider for help with this feature.

The [blue](#) links (letter grades and % scores) give you more information about your child's current average grade. If you click on any of these links, it will take you to another screen (Class Score Detail) that displays a list of individual assignments, projects, and class information. Click on the *underlined* blue links to find out the details for the assignment. Please note that not every assignment will have a description. In addition, a description of the course will be listed on the top of the screen. If a score for an individual assignment is blue, click on the score to see a comment about the individual score recorded by the teacher.

The date at the bottom of the screen shows you the last time the information was updated.

Review the bottom of the screen for a list of codes used in the gradebook.

To return to the first screen at any time, simply click on the **Grades and Attendance** icon at the top of the screen.

The **Grades and Attendance** screen also shows when your child was tardy or absent. Click on the numbers in blue to find out the days in which your son or daughter was late or absent. At WMS, attendance is taken once daily in the AM Attendance class so attendance data will appear only for that class. At WHS, attendance is taken in each class period thus attendance data will appear for each class.

## Teacher Comments

The **Teacher Comments** screen allows you to view any comments that teachers may have submitted for your child. From here, you are able to view your child's current schedule and his/her teachers. As with the **Grades and Attendance** screen, you can click the teacher name to send an e-mail to them.

## Grades History

The **Grades History** screen allows you to view a list of all grades that your child has earned to date. In one sense, this view is essentially a report card screen. In this view, you are able to see the letter grade and percentage grade. You may click on the grade to see the detail listing of scores that makeup the final grade.

## Attendance History

Click the **Attendance History** icon to see your child's attendance record for the current year. On days when school isn't in session, a dash will appear. At WMS, attendance is taken once daily in the AM Attendance class so it will be the only class that has attendance information. At WHS, attendance is taken each class period thus attendance data will appear in each class period. For a complete listing of all attendance codes used at your child's school, scroll to the bottom of the screen.

### Meeting Attendance History

Course	Expression	8/29-9/2					9/5-9/9					9/12-9/16					9/19-9/23					9/26-9/30				
		M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F	M	T	W	H	F
AM Attendance McCorkle, Michelle 206 E: 8/31/05 L: 6/22/06 Language Arts Gr. 8	HRA(M-F)	-	-				-							A							T					

## E-Mail Notification

The Email Notification screen allows you to register to receive automatic email updates sent to your personal email account. There are four areas that need to be configured for email notifications to begin. The first item to configure is the type of information you want to receive. There are 4 options to choose from. (Note: the more you select the more email you will receive.)

- **Summary of current grades and attendance** - Sends out one e-mail giving a summary of final grade and attendance totals for each of your child's classes. *This is the recommended option for parents.*
- **Detailed reports showing all assignment scores for each class** - Sends out one email for each class with each assignment for the quarter with scores. (Note: if your child has 6 classes you will receive 6 e-mails, one for each class. If you have multiple students enrolled at WMS or WHS, you can be receiving over 20 e-mails with detailed information. For that reason, we do not recommend selecting this option)
- **Detailed report of attendance** - Sends out an e-mail containing detailed attendance for each class enrolled in for the current term. WMS only takes attendance in homeroom class, so this report would not be very useful to parents of WMS students.
- **School announcements** – Sends out school announcement information.

Next, configure the “How Often?” option of the notifications. There are 5 options to choose from: Never, Once a Week, Once Every Two Weeks (recommended option), Once a Month, Daily.

**Note:** Because grades do not change dramatically over a short span, it is recommended that you not choose the Daily option. The best option to select is “Once Every Two Weeks”.

The next item, Send Now, allows you to have the e-mails sent to your e-mail account immediately. Check this box at any time and click the submit button to have e-mails sent immediately. If this is not checked you will receive the next update according to the choices made above. The server sends out the emails automatically on Mondays.

**Note:** You can make changes to this configuration screen at any time. Upon hitting the Submit button, the changes will take effect.

The final step is to configure what e-mail accounts you want active. Type in the e-mail address of the account that you want to use to receive PowerSchool e-mails. **You can have e-mail sent to multiple e-mail addresses by simply separating the e-mail addresses with a comma.**

The emails are generated by the PowerSchool system. **PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THE AUTOMATED EMAILS.** The message will not be received or read. If you have a question about the content of the emails, please contact the teacher or main office. You can email the teacher directly by clicking on their name on the Grades and Attendance screen.

## **School Bulletin**

The PowerSchool program gives parents access to the latest information happening in the school. Click on the **School Bulletin** button to pull up the list of school announcements. At the bottom of this screen, you can also access information from the previous day's bulletin by clicking on a previous date.

All screens give you the option of printing a hard copy of the information.

### **Disclaimer**

This system is provided as a convenience. Grades and other information provided by this system are not official records and may or may not be accurate. Neither this institution nor Pearson School Systems, Inc. accepts any responsibility for information provided by this system and/or for any damages resulting from information provided by this system. For official grades and student records, contact your school.

## Corresponding with Teachers

PowerSchool is a tool to increase communication between parents and teachers. 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 and end of each quarter. With PowerSchool, it will now be possible for parents to check grade information at any point in the quarter. With that in mind, parents need to know and understand the following:

1. Each teacher has their own grading system. Some teachers work on a straight points system while others weight the scores according to assignment categories (tests, quizzes, etc). Some give grades for class participation while others do not accept late work. Our teachers inform all of their students at the beginning of the course of what their expectations and grading scheme will be for the class. For this reason, it is very important for parents to read the grading policy provided by each teacher. Many teachers will list their grading policy at the top of the *Class Score Detail* screens (clicking on the student's class average in the *Grades and Attendance* screen will take you there).

2. Grades can change dramatically in the first few weeks of each quarter. In the beginning of each quarter, you may see wild shifts in the class average of your child. When there are only one or two assignments in the grade book, a low or high score can make a dramatic change in the overall grade average.

3. Teachers need time to grade 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 extra curricular activities that take time to plan and attend. With that in mind, teachers do need time to get the assignments graded. For example, a teacher will not be able to post grades for an essay assignment the next day when he/she has 25 students in their class. **We have asked our teachers to have all major test and project grades entered into PowerSchool within two weeks of the due date and minor assignments and projects will be posted within a week of their due date.** Please be patient as it does take time.

4. Teacher email addresses are posted in PowerSchool. You may communicate with the teacher through email or by phone. If you choose to use email, realize that due to the nature of the job, most teachers have little time to respond to email during the school day. Do not expect an immediate response to email messages. However, if you do not receive a response from the teacher within a day or two, please contact the school. Any correspondence with the teacher through email is considered public record. Teachers may only share strictly factual information through email. For more detailed information, you should schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

## Student Grade Concerns

When a student's grade(s) is of concern for a parent, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. Talk with your child first. Ask them what the situation is with their grade(s).
2. Read the grading policy of the teacher. This may answer the question of why the student has received the grade or explain how the assignments add up to the current average.
3. Check to see if there is an assignment description. In the *Class Score Detail* screen, if the assignment is listed in blue it will have more information about the assignment. This may help you in understanding what was involved or expected for a particular assignment.
4. Check to see if the teacher has added a comment to the assignment score. If there is a comment, the score for the assignment will be blue. Click on the blue score to read the teacher's comment.
5. Check the date of the assignment. An assignment handed in late may receive deductions from its score. Also, as stated previously, early in the quarter, overall grades can fluctuate dramatically because of the lack of assignments in the grade book.
6. In trying to clarify a class average, see if there are any missing or late assignments that could be affecting the overall grade average.
7. At anytime, you can email a teacher for clarification about grades, but the above mentioned steps may answer some of your questions or concerns. If they don't, click on the teachers name to send an email and they will be happy to reply and help clarify the situation.