

# **Guilford Public Schools**

## **PowerSchool for Parents Instruction Guide**

Welcome to Guilford Public School's PowerSchool for Parents Instruction Guide. This information will get you started using PowerSchool. PowerSchool for Parents is easy to use and will allow you to take a more active role in your child's education.

PowerSchool offers parents/guardians real-time access to grades, attendance and class information. You can even email 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 on to the Internet. All information is secure and information about your child is only available to you.

**A PowerSchool username and password has been sent through the mail to your home address. If you have misplaced this information it can be requested from your student's guidance counselor.**

Helpful Hints:

- ✓ 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 two weeks of their due date unless otherwise noted.
- ✓ 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, procedures, and codes. Please check with the teacher if you are unsure of the grading procedure or if a code is unclear.

To enter the PowerSchool program:

- 1) You can log on to PowerSchool for Parents by using any web browser.
- 2) Log onto the Adams Middle School website at <http://www.guilford.k12.ct.us/~adams/>
- 3) Click on the Powerschool for Parents button located on the home page
- 4) On the PowerSchool login screen, shown below, enter your confidential user name. On the next line, type in the password exactly as it appears on your Powerschool letter.
- 5) Click the Enter button.
- 6) **If you are asked if you want to save your password please select "NO". Powerschool encrypts the entered password each time you sign on, therefore if you select "Yes" you may have trouble signing on in the future.**



The image shows a login form for PowerSchool. At the top, the word "PowerSchool" is written in a large, green, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "PowerSchool" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font inside a rectangular box. The main form is a rounded rectangle with a light gray border. It contains two input fields: the first is labeled "Username" and the second is labeled "Password". 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 the upper right hand corner on all screens.**

Once you've logged on to PowerSchool, you will see the menu bar, shown below, at the top of the screen.



**Grades and Attendance;** on this screen, you will find a complete listing of all your student's courses, 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 emails 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 grade. If you click on any of these links, it will take you to another screen 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. The date at the bottom of the screen shows you the last time the information was updated.

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.

**Grades History;** the Grade 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 percentage grade to see the detailed listing of scores that make up 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. Attendance is taken during each period/class. For a complete listing of all high school attendance codes, scroll to the bottom of the screen.

**Email 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.

**Area #1:**

The first item to configure is the type of information you want to receive. There are 5 options from which to choose. (Note: The more you select the more email you will receive.)

- **Summary of current grades and attendance** -sends one email giving a summary of final grades and attendance totals for each of your child's classes. This is the recommended option for parents/guardians.
- **Detailed reports showing all assignment scores for each class** - sends one email for each class with each assignment for the quarter with scores. (Note: If your child has 6 classes, you will receive 6 emails, one for each class. If you have multiple students, you can be receiving over 20 emails with detailed information. For that reason, we do not recommend selecting this option)
- **Detailed report of attendance** - sends one email containing detailed

attendance for each class enrolled in for the current term.

- **School announcements** - sends school announcement information.
- **Balance Alert** - A lunch balance alert will only be sent when a student is low on funds. This is not used at this time.

#### **Area #2:**

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, and 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".

#### **Area #3:**

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

#### **Area #4:**

The final step is to configure what email accounts you want active. Type in the email address of the account that you want to use to receive PowerSchool emails. You can have email sent to multiple email addresses by simply separating the email 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.

**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 email to them.

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

**School Bulletin;** The PowerSchool program gives parents/guardians 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.

**Class registration;** this is not used at this time.

**Lunch Balance;** this is not used at this time.

**My Calendars;** provides the ability to sync assignments and grades to a calendar program (i.e., iCal or Sunbird). This is not used at this time.

## **Corresponding with Teachers**

PowerSchool is a tool that will help to increase communication between parents/guardians and teachers. We are excited at the potential of this new technology but realize that with this comes a paradigm shift. The teachers in the Guilford Public Schools have been preparing to use PowerSchool and have spent numerous hours learning how to use the program to its full potential.

We believe that, along with teachers, it is also important for parents/guardians to become educated in the process of grades and assessment. Before PowerSchool,

parents/guardians received grade information only upon request or at scheduled times via progress reports. With PowerSchool, it will now be possible for parents/guardians to check grade information at any point in the quarter. With that in mind, parents/guardians 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/guardians to understand the grading procedure provided by each teacher at Back To School Night.
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 the class. Our teachers have agreed that all assignments will be entered into PowerSchool within two weeks of the due date unless otherwise noted. 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.

## **Student Grade Concerns**

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

1. Talk with your child first. Ask them what the situation is with their grade(s).
2. Review the grading procedure of the teacher. This may answer the question why the student 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. Click on the blue wording to see more information. This may help you to understand what was involved 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, as stated previously, early in the quarter, overall grades can fluctuate dramatically because of the lack of assignments in the grade book.
5. In trying to clarify a class average, see if there are any missing or late assignments that could be affecting the overall grade average.
6. 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.