



# SAINT PETER'S PREP

NEW JERSEY'S JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL SINCE 1872

## 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

Saint Peter's 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 shift from the way grades were communicated in the past. The teachers and staff at Saint Peter's Prep have been trained on PowerSchool and continue to learn how to use the program and any new updates to its full potential.

We believe that, along with parents, it is also important for students to become educated in the process of grades and assessment. Before PowerSchool, students 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 you to check grade information more frequently. With that in mind, it is important for you 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. Your teachers should have shared their expectations and grading system with you already but if you need to review this information for clarification, teachers will have listed their grading policy on the **Section Description** filed 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 your class average. 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. **The core academic teachers should update their PowerSchool Gradebook at least every two weeks. Teachers who teach performance or project based courses may not be able to update within this time frame.**

## Part II – Working With Your Teacher

When Saint Peter’s 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 increased dialog and emails from students who have visited PowerSchool and are confused by grades or other information they see on their page. If you are concerned by a grade you see on PowerSchool, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. **Read the grading philosophy and policies of the teacher.** This may explain how the assignments add up to the current average. Sometimes, you can find the policy by clicking on any grade under ***Class Score Detail***. This information will be listed in the **Section Description** field right under the **Course Name** and **Teacher Comments** fields.
2. Check to see if there is an **assignment description**. In the *Class Score Detail* page, if the assignment is listed in **blue**, click on the assignment name and it will have more information about the assignment.
3. **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.
4. 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. PowerSchool lists the points a child has earned for each assignment as a fraction over the total available points for that assignment as well as a letter grade for each assignment. Please be aware that scores can be weighted in several different ways in a teacher’s gradebook. Some assignments are ‘weighted’ simply by virtue of the number of points assigned – for example, a quiz might be worth 50 points while a homework assignment is worth 5. Some teachers can choose to weight categories differently making assessments worth 90% of the grade while homework may only be worth 10%.
5. Please remember that **grades are fluid** and can change dramatically over time.
6. **If you still have questions, approach your teacher during a time where it does not disrupt instruction.** Make an arrangement to sit down and review grades you don’t understand.

## 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 Saint Peter’s Prep’s PowerSchool server in 2 different ways:
  - a) Go to Saint Peter’s Prep’s website <http://www.spprep.org/> and click on the “PowerSchool Portal” link under “Academics.”
  - b) Or type the following URL into the **address bar** of your browser: <http://spprep.powerschool.com/>  
**Note: \*\*Regardless of how you connect to PowerSchool the first time, you should add this to your favorites menu for future use.**
4. A login page will appear. Type in the username and password that were provided in your introductory letter and then click 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](mailto:powerschoolhelp@spprep.org)**

## Available Features of PowerSchool

1. **Grades and Attendance** - Provides access to a summary of your current grades and attendance.
2. **Attendance History** - Provides access to the complete attendance record for you for the current term.
3. **Grades History** - Provides access to your current year report card with current term grades.
4. **Teacher Comments** - Provides access to each teacher's current comments.
5. **My Calendars** - This allows parents and students to subscribe to calendars for the school and individual classes. This requires use of specific calendaring software. 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 you are 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 (a similar screen is below).

**IMPORTANT:** 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 students aware of an upcoming due date, or it may not yet be graded. Teachers may also use codes such as collected, late, missing or exempt to convey information to parents. If a score appears in blue, it means that the teacher has attached a comment to that score – click on it for more information.

## Attendance History

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

## Grade History

The **Grade History** page allows you to view a list of all grades that your child 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).

**When accessing this page you will see the following tables:**

Marking Period 1 (Q1)  
Marking Period 2 (Q2)  
Semester 1 (S1)

Marking Period 3 (Q3)  
Marking Period 4 (Q4)  
Final Exam (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.

**Thank you, and remember, questions can be directed to**  
**[powerschoolhelp@spprep.org](mailto:powerschoolhelp@spprep.org)**