

# PowerSchool Parent Portal FAQs

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## Question 1: What is PowerSchool?

**Answer:** PowerSchool is the student information system used in Van Dyke Public Schools which allows us to manage a wide range of information, including the following: grades, attendance, tests, demographics, activities, courses, and photos. Because the program has been designed using Internet-based software tools, it also allows us to connect parents and students to their information. We hope the powerful communications features of the program are helpful to parents and to students who are striving to learn and maximize their academic performance.

## Question 2: What can I see on the PowerSchool site?

**Answer:** Parents and students can access the following information on the Power School Parent-Portal:

- Grades for current classes, as well as the assignments that make up those grades
- Attendance for the past two weeks or for the whole trimester, including a legend of attendance codes used by the school
- Teacher comments
- Reports via Email, which allow parents to request daily, weekly, or monthly reports to be sent via email

## Question 3: Can other people see my son's/daughter's grades?

**Answer:** As long as you protect your password, others will not be able to see your information.

## Question 4: Do students and parents see the same screens/comments?

**Answer:** When students and parents access the PowerSchool server, they see the same information with one exception; parents have the ability to request automatic progress reports via email.

**Question 5: When will parents and students get access to the information on the PowerSchool server?**

**Answer:** Parents of students in grades 6-12 can get their logins and passwords starting October 12, 2010.

**Question 6: Whom should I call if I have a question?**

<b>Question Topic</b>	<b>Person to Contact</b>
Grades for class assignments during the current semester	Your student's teachers. Teachers' email contact info is available on the PowerSchool website at the main student screen.
Attendance on a specific day	The attendance office: LHS            586-758-8308 LMS            586-758-8323
Grades on transcripts, GPA, graduation progress, and class rank.	Your student's guidance counselor: LHS            586-758-8310 LMS            586-758-8325

**Question 7: Do all teachers post grade and attendance information to the PowerSchool server?**

**Answer:** Attendance is posted by teachers and by the office. All teachers assign and post grades to PowerSchool at different times. Some may give grades to their students' everyday and some may give far fewer grades during the semester and marking periods. This is up to each teacher and depends upon their grading system. If you see grades in PowerSchool for some teachers but not others, this is a normal function of the way teachers assign and post grades. As always you may contact teachers by e-mail or request a phone call or meeting at any time.

**Question 8: I know that teachers sometimes weight different categories of grades. How does this affect how a grade is calculated?**

**Answer:** Many teachers use categories such as tests, quizzes, daily work to organize and give different weights to grades; how they weight them is an individual decision. Teachers share with students how they grade at the beginning of each course. As always you may contact teachers by e-mail or request a phone call or meeting at any time.

**Question 9: How often can we expect grades to be updated?**

**Answer:** There are many factors that determine how soon a teacher can assess and return assignments. Essays and research papers take longer to grade than a quiz. Coaching, club sponsorships, and family commitments can also affect turnaround time, as well as a teacher's student load. All teachers do their best to grade their students and communicate their progress in a timely manner. In most instances, grades will be updated at least once per week.

**Question 10: How often can we expect attendance to be updated?**

**Answer:** Attendance at the High School and Middle School levels is recorded by the end of every period. At the elementary schools, attendance is recorded first thing in the morning and once in the afternoon.

The attendance office also enters a wide range of attendance codes, as they receive information from parents.

**Question 11: Do all teachers use the same grading scales?**

**Answer:** Yes. Grading scales are common among teachers and among classes in the same building. All teachers share their grading scales as well as other class policy information with their students at the beginning of each course.

**Question 12: How does one get a PowerSchool login and password?**

Answer: The school will provide this during enrollment or you can contact the buildings to get one.

**Question 13: What do I do if I forget my password?**

Answer: At this time you will have to call the office of your school to obtain a new password.

**Question 14: Are PowerSchool logins and passwords case sensitive?**

**Answer:** It depends on the browser you are using and the platform and operating system of the computer you are using to access the site. If all lower case does not work, we recommend that you try the login and password with the case as shown in your letter. For some logins and passwords, it is hard to know whether to use 0 (zero) or O (capital o, the letter). We recommend that you try both.

**Question 15: What is required to connect to the PowerSchool server?**

**Answer:** Users need the following to connect:

- A computer with a connection to the Internet
- Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 3.5.3 or more recent (i.e., a browser capable of 128-bit encryption)
- A login and password, to be supplied by the school

**Question 16: Can I change my username and password?**

**Answer:** It is not possible for you to change your password. Keep it confidential. You should treat it as you would an ATM card or credit card.

**Question 17: What do the codes like M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, T1, T2, T3, and YR ...mean?**

**Answer:** They are labels for different grading terms and are sometimes specific to schools. Generally T1, T2 and T3 represent final grades for Trimesters 1, 2, and 3. YR represents a year-long class. M1....M6 represent mini classes that are held at our middle school. You will find that the codes are very intuitive and easy to understand.