



Great Bend Schools USD 428

Attendance Letter Processing

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Attendance Letter Processing Overview

The Attendance Letter Processing utility identifies students with a defined number of absences and generates an attendance report to send to the student's guardians. Schools can use a generic attendance letter with a copy of the attendance report or they can use the utility to create a file for mail merge Word document attendance letters. The utility can also create an offense, action, and action details on the students' discipline records.

When the system generates an attendance report for a student the student's record is marked as having received an attendance letter. You can view information on the letters sent to a student on the Attendance tab (SM\ST) by clicking the **Letters** button. The system flags the absences it used to generate the attendance report and those absences will not trigger another attendance report. The student would need to receive additional absences to trigger another attendance report.

The Attendance Letter Processing utility requires initial setup which this document covers. You must configure the **Entity Settings**, **Threshold Maintenance**, and **Attendance Type Maintenance**. Then you must run the **Attendance Update** before creating **Attendance Letters**.

Entity Settings

You must configure entity level settings to use the Attendance Letter Processing utility.

Type of Attendance Letters

Entity year attendance options (SM\EN>Edit Entity>Edit Year\Attendance) allow you to define what type of letters to create:

- Attendance Letters by Class
- Attendance Letters by Period
- Attendance Letters by Totals

The different types of attendance letters determine how the system counts absences. You can use multiple types of attendance letters.

Counting absences by class counts each time a student misses the same class in a date range. The system counts each time a student misses a specific class, regardless of what period(s) the class is scheduled.

Counting absences by period counts each time a student misses the same period in the date range. The system counts each time the student misses a period, regardless of the class.

Counting absences by total provides the flexibility to count absences by any period missed or by days missed.

Stop Displaying/Counting Attendance Option

When selecting a type of attendance letter you also have the option to stop counting attendance when a threshold is met. Before running the attendance letter utility you define a number of absences that is the threshold. When that number is met an attendance report is generated for the student. This option deals with absences that are beyond the set threshold number. If you want the additional absences to display on the attendance report, do not select this option. If you only want the threshold absences to display, select this option.

For example, if the following conditions exist:

- The threshold is five
- A student has ten absences
- The **Stop Displaying/Counting Attendance** option is not selected

Then all ten of the student's absences display on the student's attendance report.

However, in the following situation:

- The threshold is five
- A student has ten absences
- The **Stop Displaying/Counting Attendance** option is selected

Then only the first 5 absences display on the student's attendance report.

When absences trigger an attendance letter for a threshold, those absences are flagged and will not trigger another letter. Selecting the **Stop Displaying/Counting Attendance** option affects the absences that get flagged. If the option is not selected, then all of the student's absences display and get flagged. Then if the utility is run again, the student will generate a report. However, if the option is selected, then a letter is triggered once the student's absences match the threshold. If you run report again, the additional absences could trigger another letter if they match the threshold.

Selecting Letter Types

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1. Select the appropriate checkboxes for the type of attendance letters that the entity will process: **Use Attendance Letter By Class Use Attendance Letter By Period Use Attendance Letter By Totals**

2. Select the **Stop Displaying/Counting Attendance When a Threshold Is Met** checkbox(s) for each attendance type you *want* to use this option.

Attendance Letter Thresholds

Before generating attendance letters you must create thresholds. The threshold is the number of absences required for the student to receive a letter. Thresholds are created by letter type (class, period, and total) and you can create multiple thresholds. For example, you can have a class threshold of 5 and another class threshold of 10.

When defining thresholds you also designate the term/range. The term/range indicates the dates the absences must occur in for the student to receive a letter. When setting up a threshold you select one of the following term/ranges:

- Semester
- Term
- Year
- Date Range

Selecting Date Range allows you to specify the dates in which to look for students' absences when running attendance letters.

When using Semester, Term, or Year, the students can only have one letter created for each threshold. For example, if you build a Threshold of 5 with a range of Term, once a student receives 5 absences in that term a letter is created when you run the attendance letter utility. However, if the student receives 5 more absences and you run the process again, the system will not generate a letter for the student because he or she has already received a letter for that threshold and range.

Using Date Range allows students who receive additional absences to have another letter generated.

Setting Up Attendance Letter Thresholds

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1. Select **Class**, **Period**, or **Total** in the Attendance Letter Type area.
2. Select the **Add** button.
3. Select **Semester**, **Term**, **Year**, or **Date Range** in the Attendance Term Type area.
4. Enter a numeric value in the **Threshold** field.
5. Enter a description in the **Description** field.

Attendance Type Maintenance

Before generating attendance letters you must set up Attendance Type Maintenance. The Attendance Type Maintenance defines the type of absence(s) that a student must have to trigger a letter. Attendance Type Maintenance is configured by letter type (Class, Period, or Total) and you can set up multiple Attendance Type Maintenance settings to include different types of absences.

Setting Up Attendance Type Maintenance

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- 1 Select the **Add** button.
- 2 Create a Total Attendance Type code in the **Total Attendance Type** field.
- 3 Enter a short and long description in the **Short Description** and **Long Description** fields.
- 4 Select the **Absence Types** button.
- 5 Add the absence type(s).
- 6 Select the **OK** button.
- 7 Select the **OK** button.

Note: When creating Attendance for Class letter types there is an **Accumulation Method** area with two options; Repeatable or Non-Repeatable. This option is for another state. Leave the default option Repeatable selected.

Attendance Update

You must run the update process before you can create attendance letters. In the update process the system identifies and flags students who meet the selected criteria for attendance letters. The update process is run by Letter Type (Class, Period, and Total).

Attendance Update Parameters

Attendance Type

You must attach an existing Attendance Type. The Attendance Type designates the types of absences a student must have to be flagged.

Term/Range

You also attach a Term/Range for the update process; Term, Semester, Year, or Date Range.

Term/Ranges were defined when you created Thresholds. When you attach a Term/Range, all associated Thresholds with that Class Type and Term/Range get updated.

When attaching a Term, Semester, or Year range the system defaults the date range to the start and stop dates of the entered term. You can narrow this date range by overriding the dates. If a student reaches a threshold in a term, semester, or year, the system will not flag that student ever again for that threshold and term regardless of how many more absences he or she receives. For example, if you are using year Term with a Threshold of 4 and the student has 4 four absences the update process will flag the student to receive a letter. If you run the update process again using Year with a Threshold of 4 and the student has 5 more absences (for a total of 9), the system will not flag the student to receive a letter since the student has already received a letter for that Threshold and Term.

When using Date Range, you always specify the dates to use when running the update process and the students continues to receive letters if they receive additional absences which meet the threshold, provided the **Stop Displaying/Counting Attendance** option is not selected

Period(s)

You can modify the periods to run the update process on. The system will default to the periods defined for the entity which you can override. For example, the system displays periods 0 through 6. You can modify it to only run for one period (5 through 5) or to exclude zero period (1 through 6).

Count an Absence Each Period the Class Meets option

If you are running the Attendance Update by Class letter type, you also have the option to Count An Absence Each Period Class Meets. If you select this option and a student misses a day with a course that has dual meets the system will count it as two absences,

one for each period. If you do not check this option, the system would count it as one absence.

Attendance Accumulation Method option

When running the Attendance Update by Total letter type the system can count absences by period or by days. In order to count absences by period select the **Period** option in the Attendance Accumulation area. When counting absences by period the system will flag a student if they miss the number of periods defined in the threshold.

To count absences by days select the **Date** option in the Attendance Accumulation area. Then you define how many periods missed count as a full day's absence. The system does not look at the calendar master to determine how many missed periods constitute a full day's absence.

Thresholds

The Attendance Update parameters screen displays the Thresholds that will be updated. The available thresholds are derived from the letter type and the term/range that is used.

Running The Attendance Update

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1. Select **Class, Period, or Total**.
2. Select **Attendance Update**.
3. Enter an **Attendance Type**.
4. Enter a **Term** (range).
5. Enter a date range if applicable.
6. Enter Period range if applicable.
7. Select **OK**.

Attendance Letters

To create Attendance Letters you must run the Update Process first. After running the Update Process you must select the same letter type, attendance type, and term/range. The update process identifies and flags students to receive an attendance letter based on the settings selected. You must select these same settings when running Attendance Letters utility.

The utility does not actually generate letters. It generates an attendance report for each student which can be included with an attendance letter. The system also can create a mail merge file for a Word document. The system creates a mail merge file consisting of fields you select. You can then use this file to merge with a Word document to create a custom attendance letter.

After you create the attendance letters the system will prompt you to commit the letters (if you selected the **Send out Letters** option). Selecting **Yes** marks the students as having received a letter. The absences that triggered the student to receive the letter are marked and will not cause the student to receive additional letters. The system also marks each student's record as having received a letter (SM\ST\Attendance Tab\Letters button). You can reverse the sent letter notification by selecting the Previously Sent option in the Letter Type area and selecting Undo Letter Sent Notification. You must enter the date that the letter was created and the system will remove the letter notifications created on that date on student records. However, the system will not undo discipline records that were created. Discipline records created through the attendance letter utility must be manually removed.

Attendance Letters Parameters

Attendance Type

You must select an attendance type that you ran an attendance update on. If you select an attendance type that has not had an attendance update on, the system will not return any results.

Term/Range

You must select a term/range that you ran an attendance update on. If you select a term/range that has not had an attendance update on, the system will not return any results.

Letter Type Area

You can run attendance letters on students who have not received a letter and on students who have received a letter. During normal operation you will want to select the **Not Sent** option in the Letter Type area. This option will create attendance letters for students who meet the criteria.

If attendance letters have been created in error, you can remove the attendance letter sent notification on a student's record by selecting the Previously Sent option in the Letter

Type area. When you select this option you must enter the date the letter was sent and the option to **Undo Letter Sent Notification**.

You can also use this option to recreate attendance letters already sent.

Period(s) option

You can modify the periods to run the update process on. The system will default to the periods defined for the entity which you can override. For example, the system displays periods 0 through 6. You can modify it to only run for one period (5 through 5) or to exclude zero period (1 through 6).

Send Out Letters option

This option places the letter sent notification on the student records.

Print Detailed Attendance option

This option prints out a detailed list of the student's absences instead of a summary.

Print Tardies Accrued During Letter Term option

This option prints a summary of the students' tardies during the letter term. The tardies appear on the attendance report and are not used to calculate absences.

This option is only available when creating Total letter types.

Use Report Heading option

Selecting this option allows you to add a customized heading on the report.

Page Break By Student/Family option

This option page breaks the attendance report by student / family. Select this option if you want to include the attendance report as part of the student's letter.

Print Window Envelopes option

This option prints the attendance form in a format that can be used for window envelopes. When you select this option the **Use Mailing Address** option becomes available.

Print for Families dropdown list

You can create the letters for the students' first family, second family, first and second family, or all families up to five.

Create Mail Merge option

Select this option to create a mail merge file for Word. When setting up the system to create a mail merge file you must designate which fields you want to export. You designate the location to where the system places the mail merge file. You can also enter up to four free form comments. You can save your mail merge settings.

Create Discipline Records for Students Receiving Letters option

Select this option to place a discipline record on each student who has a letter generated. You set up the system to place an offense and if you desire, an action and action details on student records. You configure the discipline information before creating the attendance letters. Then when you run that attendance letters, the system creates a discipline record for the students who receive a letter.

Available Thresholds for this Term Type

This is a list that displays the thresholds that were updated during the update process. You must highlight the threshold in the list that you want to use to create letters. For example, your update process may have updated three different thresholds, 1 absence, 3 absences, and 5 absences. If you are creating an attendance letter for students' who have five absences, you need to highlight the 5 absences threshold.

Creating Attendance Letters

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1. Select **Class, Period, or Total**.
2. Select **Attendance Letters**.
3. Enter the **Attendance Type** used when running the Update Process.
4. Enter the **Term** (range) used when running the Update Process.
5. Select **Not Sent** in the Letter Type area.
6. Enter a period range if necessary.
7. Select the **Send Out Letters** option and other letter options as desired.
8. Select the families to receive a letter.
9. Select **Create Mail Merge File** if applicable.
10. Select **Create Discipline Records for Student Receiving Letters** if applicable.
11. Highlight a Threshold.
12. Select **Print**.

Creating A Mail Merge File

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- 1 Select the **Create Mail Merge File** option from the Class Attendance By Total Report screen.
- 2 Select **Mail Merge Format**.
- 3 Click the **Delimited File Type** button and select Comma.
- 4 De-select the **Use Default File Save Path / Name** option and enter the path in the **File Save** field of where you want the file saved.
- 5 Add fields from the Available Fields area that you want for each record.
- 6 Select **#Save** to save your settings.

Creating Discipline Records

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- 1 Select the **Send out Letters** option from the **Class Attendance By Total Report**.
- 2 Select the **Create Discipline Records for Students Receiving Letters** option.
- 3 Click the **Discipline Offense** button.
- 4 Enter the Offense information and click the OK button. The offense information will be entered onto each student that has a letter created.
- 5 Click the **Yes** button on the **Setup Action and Detail Parameters** window if you want to enter action and action detail records. Click **No** if you do not.

Attendance Letter Summary Report

The Attendance Letter Summary Report displays a list of all of the letters sent out to for students in a date range. You enter the Attendance Type, Term/Range and the dates in which the letter was sent. The report then lists the students, the date the letter was sent along with other information.

You can also download the list of student's who received a letter to excel by selecting the **More** button.

Running The Attendance Letter Report

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1. Select Class, Period, or Total.
2. Select **Attendance Letter Summary Report**.
3. Enter an **Attendance Type**.
4. Enter a **Term** (range).
5. Enter the **Period** range if applicable.
6. Enter the **Date(s) Letter Sent Out**.
7. Enter the desired Threshold(s) in the **Threshold** field.
8. Select the **Print** button.