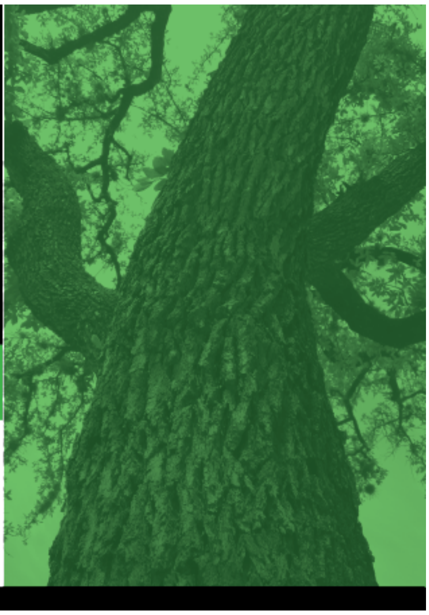
ASCENDER GUIDES



Directory (Attendance Letters)

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Attendance > Maintenance > Letters > Update > Directory

This tab allows you to create letter types in Attendance. Each type of letter is assigned a code and description and added to the letter type directory. Then, you create and save the letter on the Letter tab as a form letter or template using variables. The form letters and templates can be used to generate the actual letters.

The Attendance letters are campus-specific. They include absence letters, truancy letters, annual notifications, and general mail-out letters. All letter types, except the general mail-out letter type, create a letter control record.

- You can generate different letters for the same absence type.
- You can print different letters at the same time.
- The student address is used if the parent's address is incomplete or does not exist.
- Only one letter is generated for students whose guardians have the same last name and address.
- Letters are generated even if no parent address, student address, or guardian is found.

Best practices for attendance letters

1. Decide how you want to notify parents or guardians of a student’s absences from one of the following **Letter Type** options:

    - *Semester Absence*: Generate letters based on the number of absences for a student per semester. Choose the maximum number of absences per letter. You can use prerequisite IDs for these letters so that the letters will print in the order you set up. Letter control is written to the students’ records.

    - *School Year Absence*: Generate letters based on the number of absences for a student per school year. Choose the maximum number of absences per letter. You can use prerequisite IDs for these letters so that the letters will print in the order you set up. Letter control is written to the students’ records.

    - *Four-Week/Six-Month Truancy*: Generate letters at three and ten absences. Letter control is written to the students’ records (amount of time since the last letter was generated is considered and then the number of absences).

2. Create all of the letters you will need at the beginning of the school year.

3. Select **Select for Prt** for all the letters you have created (except *Mail out (no ltr control)*, which will print every time if selected).

4. Click **Create Letter Control** (which appears on Maintenance > Letters > Print > Letters once letters are generated) after printing annual notifications, truancy letters, or absence letters. Letter controls are used to prevent the same letters from generating for students who have

already received them.

It is best to run the letters at least once a week. Running the letters at the end of the week, using the first school day of the week for the **As of Date** gives the students time to supply letters to excuse any unexcused absences.

There are two other **Letter Types**:

- *Annual Notification*: Generate letters for all students at a campus one time. It will generate for new students even if it has already been generated for the rest of the campus. Set up multiple Annual Notifications each with a different **Ltr ID**. This letter should be used for non-attendance issues or single attendance notifications since it does not allow absence variables. Letter control is written to the students' records.
- *Mail out (no ltr control)*: Generate letters for all students at a campus one time. This letter should be used for non-attendance issues, such as announcements, since it does not allow absence variables. No letter control is written to the students' records.

Understanding Attendance Letters:

The program works by looking for **Nbr Abs Req** on Maintenance > Letters > Update > Directory and comparing it to the current total absences for the student.

If the current total absences is greater than the **Nbr Abs Req** for several letters with the same **Letter Type**, **Absence Type**, and **Period Type**, the letter with the closest **Nbr Abs Req** (that is not over the current total absences) will print. If **Select for Prt** is *not* selected, a letter is not printed.

The **Select for Prt** field does not control whether the letter is generated, only whether the letters, once generated, are printed. For this reason, it is recommended that you leave **Select for Prt** selected for all letters.

Update data:

If letter types exist, they are displayed. If no letter types exist, a blank row is displayed.

❏ Click **+Add** to add a letter type, or press ALT+1.

A blank row is added to the grid.

> **NOTE:** When using ALT+1 to add a row, you must press the 1 key on the keyboard, not the 1 key on the numeric keypad.

Ltr ID	Type a unique two-character code for the letter type.
Preq ID	Type an ID for an existing letter if the letter requires a prerequisite letter. The field is used if the letter type requires another letter to be printed for students before it can be printed for the same students. • A letter ID must already exist before it can be specified as a prerequisite ID. • Prerequisite IDs can only be specified if the selected **Letter Type** is *School Year Absence* or *Semester Absence*. • A letter cannot be its own prerequisite. • Two letters cannot have the same prerequisite. • A prerequisite letter must have the same letter type, absence type, and period type as the letter that requires it. • The **Nbr Abs Req** for a letter must be greater than the **Nbr Abs Req** for its prerequisite. • If prerequisites are used, the letter for the lowest number of absences in the prerequisite sequence is printed first. A subsequent letter is not printed (even if the student has the number of absences for which the letter is set up) until the student has at least one more absence than the number reported on the prerequisite letter. • If prerequisite letters are not used, only the letter for the greatest number of absences appropriate for the student's actual number of absences will print.
Description	Type a description of the letter type, up to 72 characters.

Letter Type	Select the letter type. The following letter types are available: • *Annual Notification* - Generates letters for all students once, including new students. You can set up more than one annual notification letter type using different letter IDs. No absence variables are allowed; therefore, the letter type can be used for non-attendance issues. • *Four Week Truancy* - Generates letters for students who have three or more unexcused absences in a four-week period in the current school year (Rule of Four Weeks warning letter as per SB1432 of the 77th Legislative Session). • *Mail Out* - Generates letters for all students. No absence variables are allowed; therefore, the letter type can be used for non-attendance issues. A letter control record is not created. • *School Year Absence* - Generates a report of cumulative absences for the entire school year. • *Semester Absence* - Generates a report of cumulative absences for the semester selected on Maintenance > Letters > Print > Letter Criteria. • *Six Month Truancy* - Generates letters for students who have ten or more unexcused absences in a six-month period in the current school year (Rule of Six Months warning letter as per SB1432 of the 77th Legislative Session). **NOTE:** Only one letter type can be created for *Four Week Truancy* and *Six Month Truancy*.
Absence Type	Select the absence type or combination of absence types for which you want to generate the letter. For certain **Letter Types**, this field is set to a default value and cannot be changed: • For *Annual Notification* letters, this field must be blank. • For *Four Week* and *Six Month Truancy* letters, this field must be U-*Unexcused*.
Period Type	Select the period for which you want to report absences. *ADA* - Reports absences and tardies that occur in the campus ADA period. *Any* - Reports a day as an absence day if the student was absent for one or more periods in the day. *Same* - Reports absence days in which the student had the most absences for a period during the reporting period (semester or year). Tardy equivalent days are not considered in this period type. For certain **Letter Types**, this field is set to a default value and cannot be changed: • For *Annual Notification* and *Mailout* letters, this field must be blank. • For *Four Week* and *Six Month Truancy* letters, this field must be *Any*.

Nbr Abs Req (number of absences requested)	Type the number of days (not periods) the student is absent or tardy that will trigger the letter to be generated. If prerequisite letters are not used, and another letter with the same **Letter Type**, **Absence Type**, and **Period Type** has a greater **Nbr Abs Req**, the letter is generated that has the closest **Nbr Abs Req**, but is not over the number of absences accumulated by the student. For certain **Letter Types**, this field is set to a default value and cannot be changed: • For *Annual Notification* and *Mailout* letters, this field must be blank. • For *Four Week* and *Six Month Truancy* letters, this field must be 3 and 10, respectively.
Nbr Tdy Equiv Req (number of tardies equivalent requested)	Type the number of tardies that equal one absence (day). Leave blank if tardies are not considered. The field is only applicable if the **Letter Type** is *School Year Absence* or *Semester Absence* and **Period Type** is *ADA* or *Any*. • All tardies are reported in the count and are displayed in the list of absences on the letter. • Tardies that occur on a day that is reported as an absence are not included in the equivalence computation. • A value cannot be entered if **Absence Type** is T (*tardy*). An error message is displayed indicating that tardy equivalents are not computed when processing the tardy absence type. • For *Annual Notification*, *Mailout*, and *Truancy* letters, this field must be blank.
Ltr Bdy (letter body)	The field is selected if the form letter has been created. The field can only be updated when the letter body is saved.

❏ Click **Save**.

- When absence letters, truancy letters, and annual notifications are printed, all fields except the **Description** field are disabled to indicate that the letters have been processed and have associated letter control records. Only the **Description** field can be changed.

- *Mail Out* letters do not create letter control records; therefore, the fields are not disabled when the letters are printed.

Other functions and features:

🗑	Delete a letter type. 1. Click 🗑 to delete a row. The row is shaded red to indicate that it will be deleted when the record is saved. You can select multiple rows to be deleted at the same time. 2. Click **Save**. You are prompted to confirm that you want to delete the row. Click **Yes** to continue. Otherwise, click **No**. You can save edits and delete records in the same step (i.e., the changes are all committed when the record is saved).
Retrieve	Click to update the letter body. The letter opens on the Letter tab allowing you to make changes.

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