

Letter (Attendance)

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Attendance > Maintenance > Letters > Update > Letter

This tab allows you to create a form letter or template for each letter ID in the Attendance letter directory.

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.

Copying a letter

The body of a letter can be copied from one letter type to another, including from one campus to another.

If you are copying a letter created in Microsoft Word, first copy the text into a .txt file to remove all formatting, then copy the text from the .txt file to the letter editor.

1. In the body of the letter, press CTRL+A to select all of the letter body.
2. Press CTRL+C to copy the letter body.
3. Open the second letter, and then press CTRL+V to paste the letter body.
4. Delete the variables in the second letter, and add new variables.

IMPORTANT: The original variables in the second letter must be deleted to generate letters successfully. The same variables may be added back.

5. Modify the letter as necessary.

Update data:

Select a letter type in one of the following ways:

- From the Directory tab, click **Retrieve** for the letter type.
- Click the Letter tab. In the drop down at the top of the tab, select the letter type.

The selected letter type is displayed in the text editor.

Type or edit the letter using as many variables as necessary.

It is recommended that you do not enter line breaks by pressing ENTER in the paragraph body, as this will cause the text to wrap incorrectly in the actual letter. Instead, let the text wrap naturally in the editor. When you click **Preview** and print the letters, the line breaks will occur in the appropriate places.

Variables	❑ To add a variable, position the cursor in the letter where you want to insert a variable. Variables must be inserted one at a time. ❑ Click **Variables** to select a variable. The Letter Variables lookup is used to select letter variables when printing attendance, discipline, or health letters. Some variables are not available, depending on the letter type. **Search for a variable:** Letter variables are listed in alphabetical order by replacement. Replacement describes the content that will appear in place of the variable when letters are generated for students. The list can be re-sorted. You can re-sort the grid by clicking on an underlined column heading. It will sort in ascending order. Click it again to sort in descending order. A triangle next to the column heading indicates the column by which the grid is currently sorted and whether it is sorted in ascending or descending order. ❑ To search for a specific variable, begin typing the replacement text in the **Search** field. The list is automatically filtered to display the variables that contain the characters you have typed. ❑ When you locate the variable you want to retrieve, click the replacement. The lookup closes, and the letter is populated with the selected variable. ❑ Repeat for the remaining variables. ❑ Click **Cancel** to close the lookup without selecting a variable. The variable is inserted into the letter, enclosed in curly brackets. Variables must be inserted one at a time. A variable cannot be used in the first line of the letter. If the first character in the letter must be a variable, precede it with a blank line to ensure that the letters process properly. ❑ To delete a variable from the letter, select the variable in the letter body and press Delete.

- The *List of Absences* variable is used to report absence types and tardy periods if tardy equivalent days are specified; it is not available for *Annual Notification* and *Mail Out* letter types.
- The font attributes (bold, italic, underline, strikeout) for the *List of Absences* variable should not be changed. Otherwise, the letters will not generate.
- A variable cannot be used in the first line of the letter. If the first character in the letter must be a variable, precede it with a blank line to ensure that the letters process properly.

Click **Save**.

Preview	Click to preview the letter. The letter opens in PDF format in an embedded Adobe Reader window where you can print, save, and perform other functions.

Margins	Adjust the left, right, top, and bottom margins as needed. The margins are specified in inches. Use three digits for the margin with two decimal places (e.g., 1.00).
Refresh Margins	Click if you changed the margins. The letter is redisplayed with the new margins.

❑ Click **Save** to save changes to the margins.

Edit	Click to return to the letter editor.


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