

SMS Attendance Notification System Setup Guide

One of the challenges facing school districts today is how to accurately and quickly relay attendance information to parents and guardians. Focus' fully integrated SMS Attendance Notification System provides districts with the ability to notify parents of their student's attendance in real-time. Districts are able to set up a mass SMS text message of pre-selected attendance codes. Once teachers mark a student's attendance for the day/ period, parents are notified with a text message if the pre-selected attendance codes applies to their student.

Getting Started

The SMS Attendance Notification System was introduced in Version 9.1. The SMS Attendance Notification System setup is quick and easy, requiring only a few items that will need to be determined upon and implemented before messaging will be available.

Twilio Account

Focus uses Twilio services to communicate with parents automatically. Twilio is a secure cloud communications platform used for different types of engagement. Focus will set up a Twilio account and phone number that will be used to send attendance messages to parents.

We highly recommended utilizing Focus managed services, Twilio SMS communications. Focus offers comprehensive tools in regards to monitoring and managing your Twilio account. Additionally, using Focus' Twilio account is more cost-effective to the district vs. maintaining an individual account. However, clients can manage their own Twilio account which is supported by the FOCUS-Twilio integration.

Choosing an Area Code

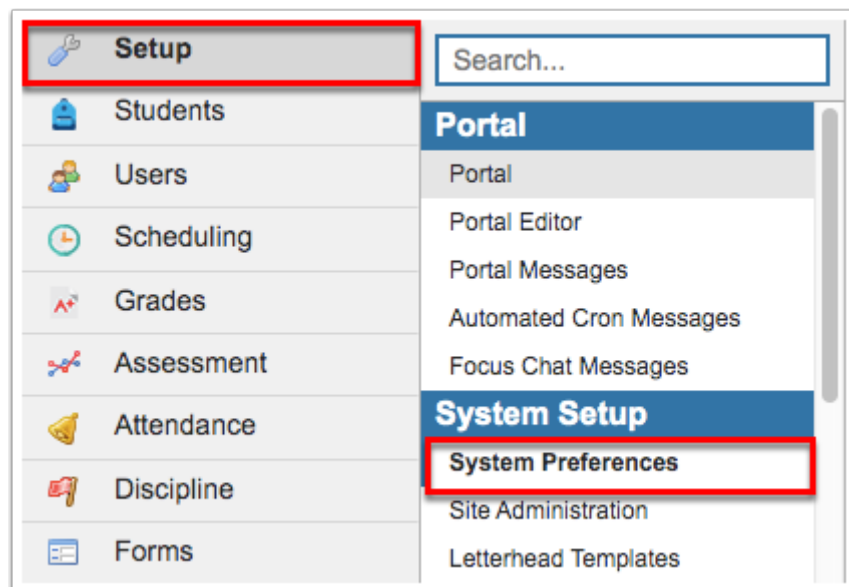
Provide the desired area code that you want the text messages to be sent from. Attendance text messages will be sent from this area code and phone number and will communicate with selected contacts of students.

If no area code is provided, FOCUS will choose the area code and phone number.

District Access

Determine the attendance code/ alert and default text message that will be sent out to parents.

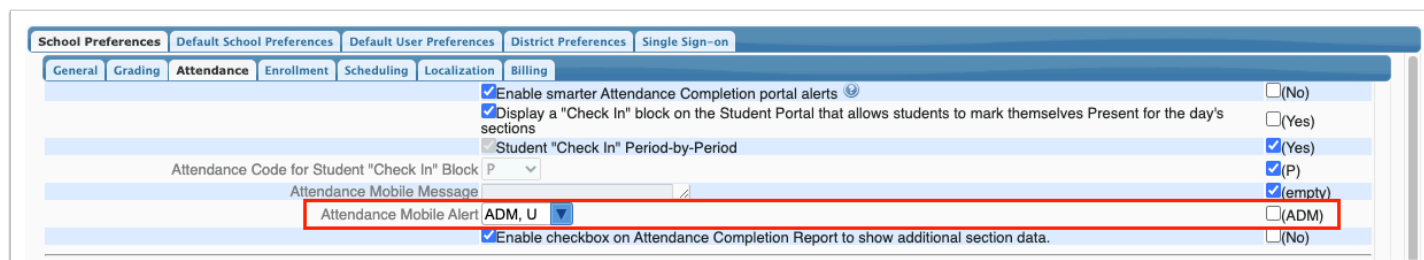
1. To locate SMS services, from the **Setup** menu, click [System Preferences](#).



2. Click the **Default School Preferences** tab, then click the [Attendance](#) tab.



3. Scroll down to find the **Attendance Mobile Alert** preference. Choose from the pull-down menu which attendance codes/ alerts the scheduled cron job uses to trigger the automated text and message from when attendance is taken.



4. In the **Attendance Mobile Message** text area, type in the determined message included in the text that will be sent to parents for the selected attendance codes/ alerts.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Teachers enter hours present (recommended for some adult/vocational schools)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teachers are allowed to enter more hours than scheduled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Students can have attendance for more than one section in a period (not recommended)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enable smarter Attendance Completion portal alerts
Attendance Mobile Message	Student was absent today.
Attendance Mobile Alert	U
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enable checkbox on Attendance Completion Report to show additional section data.

Districts can customize the attendance code and message under the School Preferences tab if a school needs different options than what has been set up at the default/ district level on the Default School Preferences tab,

Scheduled Jobs

1. SMS text messaging is automated through Focus Scheduled Jobs features. To set up the built-in SMS Texting Scheduled Job go to the **Setup** menu, then select [Scheduled Jobs](#).

Setup	<input type="text" value="Search..."/>
Students	Run Lottery
Users	School Choice Reports
Scheduling	Print Letters
Grades	School Choice Application
Assessment	Magnet Application
Attendance	Special Placement Application
Discipline	Import
Forms	Import Student Photos
Billing	Import Staff Photos
Eligibility	Manage Integrations
	Scheduled Jobs
	Match Students - Admin Panel
	Match Students - School Panel

2. From the scheduled jobs pull-down, select **Attendance SMS**. Click **Create Job**.

Attendance SMS
Create Job

Filters: OFF
Search

Priority	Weekdays	End Date	Class	
	Every day	N/A	ExternalAPIDeleteRecordsCronJob	Run
	Every day	N/A	ExternalAPITransferCronJob	Run

3. This screen allows you to pick what time and day the cron Job is run, the priority of the cron Job, an end date for the cron Job, and who the results of the cron Job will be sent to with the provided address.

Attendance SMS

Run Time

Any

:

Any

AM

Weekdays

☐ Monday
 ☐ Tuesday
 ☐ Wednesday
 ☐ Thursday
 ☐ Friday
 ☐ Saturday
 ☐ Sunday

Priority
If multiple jobs are scheduled to run in the same time slot, high-priority jobs will run before low-priority jobs.

End Date
If set, this is the last day the cron job will run.

E-mail address
The results of the cron job will be sent to this address.

Debug Mode:
☐ Debug Mode

The cron Job will run every 15 minutes if a **Run Time** is not selected. You must select which weekdays you want the cron Job to run.

4. After inputting the information in the Attendance SMS cron job, make sure to click **Save** to create the job.

[Back](#)
[Save](#)

Attendance SMS

Run Time
Any : Any AM

Weekdays
☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

Priority
If multiple jobs are scheduled to run in the same time slot, high-priority jobs will run before low-priority jobs.

The Scheduled cron Job will now be in the queue showing the Job Title, Job Time, Priority, Weekdays, End Date, and Class.

Jobs							
Execution History							
3 Jobs		Filters: OFF		Search			
		Job Title	Job Time	Priority	Weekdays	End Date	Class
-	Edit	Delete External API Data	12:00 AM		Every day	N/A	ExternalAPIDeleteRecordsCronJob
-	Edit	Attendance SMS	every 15 minutes	1	Monday, Wednesday and Friday	N/A	AttendanceSMSCron
-	Edit	Transfer External API Data	every 15 minutes		Every day	N/A	ExternalAPITransferCronJob

Enable the SMS Indicator

For any existing student contact data sets, you are going to need to update SMS contingent to the criteria for contacts to receive SMS text messages. New Address Fields for SMS Texting have been installed in Version 9.1. These fields allow the SMS Text message to occur for a specific contact and for specific contacts to not receive SMS Text Messages.

1. To do this, navigate to the **Students** menu and select [Student Info](#). From there, find the student you wish to enable their contacts to receive SMS text messaging. Navigate to [Addresses & Contacts](#) tab and select the desired contact to enable.

Each contact can have the SMS indicator enabled for a student or just the custodial contact.

2. A pop up window will come up to edit the contact information. In this window you will find the Phone & Contact Details area. To enable SMS texting for this contact select which Contact Type will receive the SMS text message and then select the **SMS** check box.

If the contact type is not capable of receiving SMS text messages, either nothing will happen or it will be converted to a voice message depending on the carrier.

Automated Responses

Upon receiving the SMS text message, recipients can turn off notifications for the rest of the day by replying "TODAY" or opt out of receiving SMS text messages completely by replying "UNSUBSCRIBE." If contacts want to receive SMS text messages again after unsubscribing, they will need to reply in the text message thread with "START."

Notice: [REDACTED] had an unexcused absence today for section [REDACTED] HIGH SCHOOL!

Reply TODAY to stop receiving messages about attendance for the rest of the day. Reply UNSUBSCRIBE to never get attendance messages again.

TODAY

You will no longer receive text messages for the remainder of the day!

UNSUBSCRIBE

You have successfully been unsubscribed. You will not receive any more messages from this number. Reply START to resubscribe.



START

You have successfully been re-subscribed to messages from this number. Reply HELP for help. Reply STOP to unsubscribe. Msg&Data Rates May Apply.

i Turning off notifications for the rest of the day, "TODAY," only applies to notifications received for that particular student up to the point in time the "TODAY" reply is sent. If there is a sibling at the same school, notifications for that student will still be receivable for the rest of the day.

If contacts choose to opt out of receiving SMS text messages, this will automatically select the "UNSUBSCRIBE" check box in the Phone & Contacts Details section.

Phone & Contact Details: Enter phone number(s) and other details for this contact. Multiple entries can be saved by pressing the ENTER key on your computer.

Export   Filter: OFF

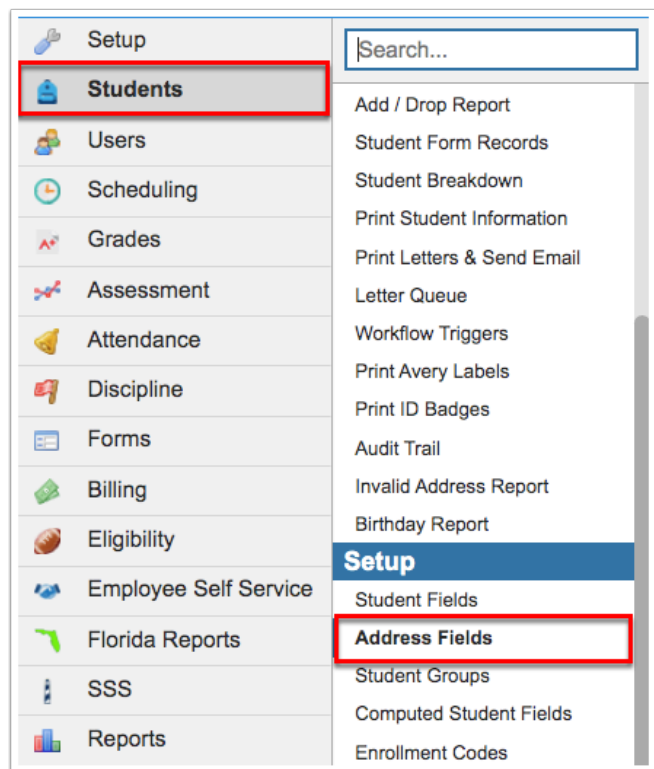
Contact Type	Phone Number / Value	Detail Priority	Options
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	- +	
Home Phone	(813) 567-3423	- +	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unlisted <input type="checkbox"/> Callout <input type="checkbox"/> Blocked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SMS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNSUBSCRIBE

! If contacts reply to SMS text messages with Unsubscribe, Stop, Stop All, Cancel, Quit, or End, they will be opted out of receiving SMS text messages until replying with "START."

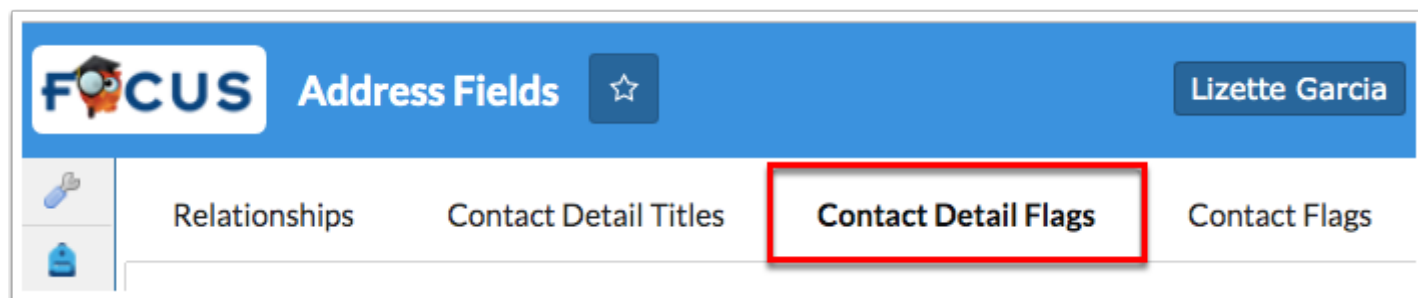
Renaming Contact Detail Flags

The pre-installed Contact Detail Flags utilized in Focus' SMS Attendance Notification System can be renamed. Renaming these fields can help school personnel understand the function of each field.

1. To rename contact detail flags, from the **Students** menu, click [Address Fields](#).



2. Click the **Contact Detail Flags** tab.



3. Click the **Title** field to edit the assigned text, such as SMS or UNSUBSCRIBE.

Save

Export

Title	Address	Contact Details	For Phone Number	Database Column Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Unlisted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	unlisted
Callout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	callout
Blocked	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	blocked
SMS <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	sms
UNSUBSCRIBE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	unsubscribe

4. Once updated, the Title field turns yellow, which remains until you click **Save**. If the Save button is not clicked, the edits will not save.

Save

Export

Title	Address	Contact Details	For Phone Number	Database Column Name
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Unlisted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	unlisted
Callout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	callout
Blocked	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	blocked
Text Messages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	sms
UNSUBSCRIBE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	unsubscribe

The SMS title could be renamed to "Texting (SMS)" and the Unsubscribe title could be renamed "Opted out of Texting."

i If the District uses the Kiosk or Handheld devices and the attendance alert/ code has been triggered, these devices will send an email, SMS text message, and a push notification to the contacts that have been enabled.