Truancy System Database

User Guide

Version 11

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Introduction

History of the Truancy System Database

The Truancy System database began life in 1999. The first version was written originally for the North Taranaki Truancy Service who wanted a simple database to help with completing the stats on the Ministry Milestone Report. That version was written using DBaseIII+.

The original database was helpful, though it quickly became apparent that a more sophisticated and feature rich database program would be more useful. A new database would greatly improve the ease and accuracy with which the Ministry Milestones could be produced and would also improve the ease of recording and accuracy of information reported back to the various other interested parties.

From these beginnings grew the current version of the Truancy System Database.

What does it do?

The database has the following goals:

- To make it easy and quick to record information about referrals of students, and the associated dealings with students, schools and agencies.
- To make it easy to produce the MoE Milestone reports. Provided relevant data is entered regularly, printing the Milestone report can take a few minutes.
- To make it easy to find and refer back to information related to dealing with students etc.
- To make it easy to produce reports for passing on to relevant interested parties.

Paper Systems vs Electronic Systems

It's possible to have a manual, paper based system that provides the required information. A computer based system however, allows us to record, access, sort, categorise, spell check, count and print data a great deal easier and faster than is possible manually. This means the burden of administration can be significantly reduced and more time can be spent on the more important parts of the job – the things that make a difference.

System Requirements

The recommended minimum PC is one which can run Windows 98 or better (Windows XP or Vista is recommended) and Access 2000 (or Office 2000 Professional) or better.

Software Required

The program uses Microsoft Access 2000 or better. Microsoft Access is most commonly installed on PCs as part of Microsoft Office Professional (note that Microsoft Office Standard does not include Microsoft Access). If your DTS is associated with a school, you may have access to the software through the Microsoft Schools Agreement which covers Microsoft Office Professional. Check with the person responsible for ICT at the school. A licence for Microsoft Access can also be purchased separately if required.

Installing the Truancy Database

Installing on a Single PC

1. Download the latest installation file from the website www.truancy.co.nz
2. Run this setup file and install in the required folder. The default folder is C:\TS, but during installation you may change this folder if you wish.

Installing on a Network (for access by more than one user)

It is possible to have multiple users accessing the database from different computers. In this case each computer should have a copy of the database installed and is then connected to a single shared data file stored in a shared location on the network. The following steps give the details of how to set up such a configuration. If you're not familiar with networking and creating shared network folders, you should consult your IT support people.

Important note about security and privacy of the information in the data file:
To ensure the security of the information in the data file, make sure that only authorised users (who will be using the database) have the required privileges for accessing the shared data folder.

1. **Create or choose the shared data folder** for the shared data file. This can be an existing shared network folder or you can create a new one specifically for the Truancy data file. An example might be **\\main_computer\ truancy.**
2. **Set the access permissions** on the shared data folder, so that only authorised users of the Truancy Database have **Read/Write/Modify access** to this folder and other users have no access.
3. **Install the Truancy Database on <u>each</u> computer** into the required local directory (Eg. install the database on each computer into C:\TS). This ensures that each computer has a local copy of the client / program part of database.
   Note: <u>It is NOT recommended</u> to install the Truancy Database into a shared network folder as this can create performance issues when multiple users are accessing the same front end part of the database. It should be installed on a local drive / folder on each of the user's computers (the local installation will be configured later to connect to the shared data file).
4. **Copy the active data file** (the one with all the live data in it) to the **shared data folder**. If this is a new installation and you don't already have an active data file, copy **tsdata.mdb** from one of the computers where the Truancy Database was previously installed. If you have already been using the Truancy Database, the location and name of the active data file will be visible on the bottom of the Main Menu screen.
5. **Configure each computer** individually to access the shared data file as follows:
   a) Start the Truancy System Database.
   b) Click on Configuration, then click on Data File.
   c) Type in the full path and name to the shared data file
   (Eg. \\main_computer\truancy\tsdata.mdb)
   d) Click OK. You will then receive a message advising if the connection was successful.
   e) Close the Configuration menu and check that the correct data file is showing at the bottom of the Truancy Database Main Menu.

Getting Started with the Database

After you have installed the database, there are a couple of things that need to be done before you start recording students and events.

1. Add the schools and agencies you deal with.
2. Add the Truancy Officers and/or the teams that will be recorded on events relating to students. Every event is recorded with the name or names of the officers concerned.

Adding Schools/Agencies

1. Start the database to get to the Main Menu.
2. Click the **Schools** button.
3. Click **New School** to create a new blank record.
4. Enter the school or agency details, be sure to set the **School Typ**e (Primary or Secondary). If entering an agency or organisation that is not a school, set the type to “Not a School”.
5. Set the school’s **MoE Number** (use the […] button next to the MoE Number box)
6. Click **Save** (or click **New School** to add the next school – the previous school’s details will be saved automatically).

Adding Officers

1. Get to the Main Menu.
2. Click the **Configuration** button.
3. Click the **Officers** button.
4. Go to the last blank line and add the details of the officer or the officer team (eg Mary and Steve). If required, you could add the mobile phone number or other such information in the notes area. Each record is saved automatically when you either add another record, or if you close the Officers list. If you have officers that no longer work with your service, untick the ‘Active’ box so they don’t appear in any lists. Don’t delete them as they may be part of earlier events.

The Structure of the Database

The database stores the following information:

- School and Agency names and contact details.
- Student names and details, including caregiver contact information.
- Events relating to students, schools, other agencies or the community. These events are separated into two categories:
  (a) **Student events**: events related to specific students (eg referrals, home visits etc).
  (b) **Journal events:** events not related to specific students. These journal events may or may not be related to a particular school (eg meetings, assisting with attendance policies etc).

Working with Schools in the Database

Finding Schools

Once in the Schools screen, finding a school can be done using the 'Find School' box at the top of the screen:

- Type any part of the school's **name** or the unique **ID number** and press **Enter** (or click the binoculars **find** button).
- If you **leave the box empty** and press **Enter** (or click the binoculars **find** button) you'll see the entire list sorted alphabetically.

Adding Schools/Agencies

1. Get to the **Main Menu**.
2. Click the **Schools** button.
3. Click **New School** to create a new blank record.
4. Enter the school or agency details, be sure to set the School Type (Primary or Secondary). If entering an agency or organisation that is not a school, set the type to "Not a School".
5. Click **Save** (or click **New School** to add the next school – the previous school's details will be saved automatically).

Entering Events for Schools

This process is similar to that for students, except that events recorded against a school are 'Journal' events and are not directly related to specific students.

1. **Find** the school concerned.
2. Click on the **New Event** button.
3. Enter the **date**, the **time**, choose the **officer**, choose the **event type** and enter the **details**.
4. Click the **Save & Exit** button to save the event.

Entering Non-School Journal Events

Journal events are events not directly related to specific students. Events entered on the Schools screen are journal events, but you can also enter other journal events that are not associated with a particular school. Examples are board meetings, community meetings, advice to parent groups, attending training courses etc.

1. Get to the **Main Menu** screen
2. Click on the **Journal** button
3. Click on the **New** button
4. Enter the date, the time, choose the officer/s, choose the event type and enter the details.
5. Leave the school field blank if the event is not associated with a particular school or agency
6. Click the **Save & Exit** button to save the event

Notes:

- You will see school events in this list as well because school events are considered as journal events.
- For events that are not related to a school, leave the school field blank.

Working with Students in the Database

Adding New Students

1. Get to the **Main Menu**
2. Click on the **Students** button
3. Click **New Student** to create a new blank record
4. Enter the student's details, including their current school.
5. Click **Save** (changes to student details are saved automatically as soon as you move away from the record. This button is included to allow you to save a record without moving away)

Notes:

- After putting in the DOB, the age is displayed (eg 12.3 is 12 years and 3 months)
- The Level@Year boxes give an indication of the students level in a particular year
- Address1 and 2 can be used as two lines of a single address, or as two different addresses if required.

Finding Students

Once in the Students screen, finding an existing student can be done using the 'Find Student' box at the top of the screen:

- Type any part of a student's **first name, last name** or their unique **ID number** and press **Enter** (or click the binoculars **find** button).
- If you **leave the box empty** and press **Enter** (or click the binoculars **find** button) you'll see the entire list sorted alphabetically.

Entering Referrals or Other Events for a Student

1. **Find** the student concerned (if not found, then Add the student)
2. For referrals, click on the relevant **Referral** button (**School, Community or Other**)
3. For other events (eg Home Visits etc) click the **Other Event Entry** button.
4. Enter the **date**, the **time**, choose the **officer**, and enter the referral/event details
5. Click the **Save & Exit** button to save the entry.

Notes:

- The student's <u>current</u> school is recorded against each event. If a student changes schools, previous events remain recorded against the school they attended when the event was entered. For this reason it's possible for students to have events recorded against more than one school.

Entering and Managing Referrals for Students

With the new milestone format for 2010, the entry of referrals has changed a lot from previous versions.

All information required for the Ministry Milestone is now stored in the Referral record(s) for the student. Other events are for your own records and are not sent to the Ministry in the Milestone export.

To meet the Ministry Milestone export requirements, each referral must have the following information recorded against it:

- Whether the referral was responded to within 24 hours
- Whether the student was returned to school that day
- Whether you reported back to the referrer within 5 days
- The Stated Reason for the absence (the reason the caregiver/student gives for the student's absence. The school may give you this reason, or they may give you their own reason for referring it to you. If the school gives the reason such as "Absent for X days", then you must get the Stated Reason from the caregiver/student.)
- The Proposed Reason for the absence (the reason you perceive to be the 'real' reason)
- Any other agency's involved
- Comments you may wish to add to the data sent to the ministry

Note: the information you type in the Details box on a referral is **not** sent to the Ministry – only the information you type in the Extra Comments box will be.

Suggested Work Flow

1. When you receive a referral, you create the appropriate **Referral Record** for the student.
2. You make contact with the home and if necessary arrange and complete a **Home Visit**.
3. You update the original **Referral Record** that you responded within 24 hours and you update the Stated Reason and the Proposed Reason (see above for explanations).
4. You add any additional information to the original **Referral Record**
5. If required, you add any Other Event records with further information (eg Home Visit etc). The other events are for your records and are not sent to the ministry in the milestone submission.
6. Once the matter is finally completed, you go back into the original **Referral Record**, update any remaining information and mark it as Complete.

Printing Reports

Printing Student Reports

From the Students screen, you can print several reports:

- Click the **History** button to print a report of the events for the current student. You will have the option to limit the list to the events within a selected date range. The default date range gives all events since the beginning of the year.
- Click the **Students List** button to print a list of ALL students. If you wish to print a list of students with events in a given date range, go to the Reports screen from the Main Menu.

Notes:

- The Schools list can also be printed from the Reports screen

Printing School Reports

From the Schools screen, you can print any of the following reports:

- Click the **Journal Events** button to print a report of the events for the current school.
- Click the **Student Events** button to print a report of the events for the students of the school.
- Click the **Schools List** button to print a list of ALL schools.

Notes:

- The Schools list can also be printed from the Reports screen

Other Reports

Other reports can be printed from the Reports screen. There is a variety of reports which are updated from time to time to include requests from Truancy Services for reports that may be useful.

MoE Data Export

The Milestone export is a Microsoft Excel file which is saved in the same folder as your database program file (look at Program folder on the Main Menu). To submit your Milestone, you must produce this export file and then email it as an attachment to dts.milestone@minedu.govt.nz

The export file name is similar to the following:
"DTS_2011_Term 1 & 2_(Your DTS Name) _1_Report.xls

Producing the MoE Milestone Export

1. Get to the **Main Menu** screen
2. Click on the **Reports** button
3. Scroll down and click on **MoE Milestone Export**
4. Click on **Set Dates** and click either **Milestone 1** (Term 1 & 2) or **Milestone 2** (Term 3 & 4). Click OK to close the Set dates screen.
5. Click **Preview**
6. When informed how many referrals will be exported, click **OK**
7. When the export is complete, you will be given the opportunity to open the exported file (for checking)
8. When ready email the completed milestone export file to dts.milestone@minedu.govt.nz