

User Guide to PTCFast.com

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2 INTRODUCTION

PTCFast.com began offering parent-teacher conference scheduling in 2008-2009. Our goal was to make the system so simple to use that it doesn't require a user guide. Tens of thousands of teachers and school administrators have used it without a guide, and more than two million student appointments have been made on the system as of the beginning of 2017. Over this period, requests for help have been quite infrequent. However, the system has grown in complexity and sophistication as we have upgraded it in response to dozens of requests and suggestions from users. For that reason, we created a User Guide back in 2014. As with everything we do at PTCFast.com, we welcome your comments and suggestions on this user's guide (reach us at). – Mike & Ed, Founders, August, 2017

3 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The remainder of this guide is divided into several sections. Section 4 (BASIC USAGE SCENARIOS) outlines typical scenarios for how people use the system (Section 4.4 is for individual teachers, and Section 4.5 is for school administrators). Section 5 describes our payment system (new as of 2017). Section 6 covers Team Teaching. Section 7 describes how parents interact with the system.

If you are a new user looking to get started as quickly as possible, we suggest you read Sections 4.1 - 4.3, and then read whichever part of the Section 4.4/4.5 pertains to you. Finally, we hope you will at least skim the remaining sections.

4 BASIC USAGE SCENARIOS

4.1 OVERVIEW

PTCFast.com provides a set of online tools that allow a teacher or a school to set up one or many different parent-teacher conferences. After you create an account, you can set up one or more conferences on the system, and adjust the options to your own liking. When you are ready, you "launch" these conferences, which make it possible for parents to begin signing up online for appointments.

If you are an administrator setting up multiple conferences for an entire school, you should normally create just a single administrator account; within this account you can create all of your conferences (the Manage Conference page is the place to create new conferences). You can set up additional conferences by cloning one starting conference, which will speed things up if (as is usually the case) there is a lot of overlap between the choices you need to make for the different conferences. If you are the school administrator setting up many conferences, from the Reports/Deadlines page you can provide each teacher with partial access to the scheduling

process for their own conference; e.g., you can make it so that they can manually set up appointments for parents who contact them directly. Note that when you do this, the teachers do not get their own full login credentials nor do they log in to your account—instead, they receive emails that contain links to access the system. (Some schools have individual teachers each set up their own account and conference; this is briefly discussed at the beginning of Section 4.4 below.)

One other general tip: Whether you are an individual teacher or an administrator setting up many conferences, many of the most useful features on the site are found on the Manage Conference page. Here you can do things like edit your account information, add or delete conferences, print schedules, and so forth. Once you have created an account we recommend you look over everything on the Manage Conference page so you can get familiar with the many tools available there (and when you log into the site Manage Conference will normally be your starting point).

4.2 TESTING OUT THE SYSTEM

Many people want to test out the system on their own before using it for real conferences. For example, you might want to make test accounts, set up schedules, and go in as a simulated parent and see how it works—to figure out if it is suitable for your needs. For exactly this purpose, we now offer Free Demo Accounts. Free Demo Accounts are limited in that you can't make appointments for more than 5 parents with any conference created under a Free Demo Account. To create a Free Demo Account, click on the "Free Demo" checkbox during the account creation process. If you want to turn a Free Demo Account into a real account (e.g., a Free Trial Semester account), you can do that at any time on Manage page. Otherwise, Free Demo Accounts are purged every few weeks. (Note that a Free Trial Semester account is an account with full privileges for a single semester, and is to be used with real conferences and real parents.)

4.3 COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Parents register themselves anew each semester. They do not acquire a permanent login and password. During the account creation process, you will be asked to you select one of three options for how to communicate with them (don't worry - you can change your selection later). Whichever option you choose governs all the conferences on the account (that is a slight change that was introduced in 2017 to simplify things.) The three options are as follows:

- Option 1 (the easiest choice) is to have PTCFast set up a "**School Web Page.**" The system creates the page and provides you with a single link which parents use to go online and pick their teachers. All parents use the same link, which makes it simple. Many schools put the link on their homepage and simply direct parents there. Parents can sign up for as many conferences as they want, so they do need to know to choose which ones to sign up for. If parents know the name(s) of their children's

teachers, this should not be a problem (assuming you include the teacher’s name in the name of the conference—as almost all schools do.)

- Option 2. Each class/teacher gets a “**Class Code**”, which is provided to the parents in that class. They go to link we provide and enter that code, which tells the system what teacher/class they are registering for. In this case, each class gets a different letter, typically sent to parents via backpack mail or distributed at open houses. It’s more work for the school, but has the advantage that parents can only register for classes for which you want them to sign up.
- Option 3. This is called the “**Parent Code**” option, and each parent is pre-assigned his/her own individual code for each conference they will be attending (a different code than what any other parent gets). This option requires you to enter a list of student names for each class, and the system then assigns a unique code for each. If you choose this option, when you got to Notice Settings (or Manage) you can get a file containing a letter for each parent explaining how it will work and giving them their code for this conference, which you deliver to them (typically via backpack or open house). Only about 1% of our schools use this option, probably because it is more trouble (it is probably a little more secure against prank signups, however).

4.4 BASIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS USING THE SYSTEM FOR A SINGLE CONFERENCE.

Signing up as an individual teacher with one conference is exceptionally easy. From the home page, click on Teacher/School Login and look for “To Create New Account”. System will offer button to Create Free PTCFast Account”. Click on this. Sign up under First Time Users, providing email, password, school name and location, and click [Login to Create Conference](#). System will ask you to indicate whether you are signing up for a One-Time Free Trial Semester or a Regular Account (If you have not used the system before, you are welcome to choose the Free Trial Semester.)

The system will now ask you for your email and a password. This is your account access information. It will also ask for your school name and location and to indicate if you will want your parents to be able to access Spanish text (which you would provide—see below).

The next step will be for the system to ask you how you wish to communicate with your parents. The three basic options were discussed above—see Section 4.3. As an individual teacher you probably want to select Conference Code option (the School Web Page is a bit more than what you really need for one conference).

Finally it asks you for the name of your conference. Probably you will want to include your own name in the conference name, e.g., “Parent/Teacher Conference with Ms. Jones”. Also indicate the grade level.

When you are ready, click on [Enter my choice and create Time Blocks](#) button.

At this point you are ready to create some “time blocks”. A time block is a set of consecutive appointments. For example, one time block might run from 9 AM to noon, and might consist of 3 15-minute appointments per hour with 5 minute breaks between appointments. If you want to have a big break (e.g., for lunch), it is best to create one time block before lunch and a second time block after lunch. (Some users set up one big time block running the whole day, and then make a fake appointment for “LUNCH”. This will probably work OK, but it has some disadvantages, so we recommend not doing it that way.)

To create a time block, first select the date. You can create a time block as much as two years in advance (the system checks that you have a Free Trial Semester for that semester, or that you have paid for that semester—See Section 6 below.). Then pick the start time for the whole block, the length of each appointment and the gap between the end of one appointment and the start of the next. So for example, if you want 3 15-minute appointments per hour with 5 minute breaks, set Length of Meeting = 15 minutes and Gap = 5 minutes.

Some users want to set up appointments that start at “funny times” like 2:07. Is that possible? Yes, it is. In the Start Time menu, click on “Other”. The system will provide a blank in which you can enter e.g., “2:07 PM” just like that (don’t forget the AM or PM!).

Before submitting your first time block, you also need to select the end of the last appointment in the time block. The dropdown menu will calculate the potential end times—pick the one that works for you.

When you have made all these selections, click on Submit Selected Times and Display Schedule. The system will now display all the time blocks you have selected—along with options to Add New Block, Edit Block, Delete Block. In the Time Blocks display, you’ll also notice a place where the name of the parent can be displayed. Since you just created the Time Block, and have not launched the conference yet, all the appointment times will appear as “unfilled”. Continue to make as many time block as you need for your conference. When you are all done with that, click on Done with Times.

If you did not choose the Free Trial Semester, the system will ask you to pay \$4.00 for the conference, specifying what semester it will take place in. It doesn’t matter if that semester has begun or not. Once you have purchased and redeemed a ticket for a given semester, you are free to create Time Blocks which take place in that semester.

In addition to Done with Times, you’ll notice several other actions available to you here on Time Blocks. You can view the schedule as parents will see it, and you can also send appointment reminders to all parents, and print a schedule. For now, don’t worry about these options, but once your conferences are launched, these may come in handy.

When you indicate you are done with time blocks, starting in 2017, the system checks to be sure that you either have a Free Trial Semester status for that semester, or that you have paid for semester usage for that semester, or that you have paid for an individual conference for that semester. If you have not, it will offer to route you to the Billing page where you can do so. After paying, you can always go back to the Billing page (available via Manage) and obtain a printable invoice or a PDF invoice.

After Time Blocks, the next screen you see is Notice Settings. Here you are reminded of what choice you made about how your parents will sign up. This screen also allows you to print

letters to send parents telling them how to use the system. For users setting up multiple conferences, however, you may wish to create all your conferences first and then come back here (or go to Manage) to obtain these letters to parents.

The next screen is called Emails. Here you provide some basic information that will be incorporated in emails that are displayed to parents when they sign up, and contained within the reminder emails they will receive before their appointments. We think you'll find the questions pretty self-explanatory.

The Reports and Deadlines page allows you to specify how often you want the system to communicate with you. We recommend letting it provide frequent updates, and the default selections provide for that. This page also allows administrators to enter the email of a teacher (or other colleague) associated with a particular conference, designating them to receive updates about the conference. Please read the options in the Designate Colleagues section carefully so you understand the choices you are making. But for individual teachers, this section will probably not affect you.

If you have made the required selections on all the previous pages, you are now able to view our Terms of Service and launch your conference. On the Launch page, you will be told about anything that needs to be finalized prior to launch.

Once you have launched your conference, parents can begin to sign up, following whatever choice you made about the method of communication with parents. You can always change your mind on the Manage Conference page. You are welcome to come back and log in any time you want, either before or after you launch. The system will generally start you off in the Manage Conference page. Visit TimeBlocks to see the appointment times (and after launch, this will also display the names of parents who have signed up, if any.)

4.4.1 Spanish Translation Option

In 2017 we introduced a Spanish Translation Option to allow you to make screens and letters available in Spanish for parents who speak Spanish only. To choose this option, go to the bottom of Manage page and check the box next to "Turn on Spanish translation option for parent communication".

If you pick this option, pages used by parents will display a US and Spanish flag in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. If a parent clicks on the Spanish flag, the system will switch over to displaying screens in Spanish (in this session and in any subsequent sessions if the parent returns to the site.) The option can be unselected whenever the parent desires.

When the parent chooses the Spanish option, all the fixed (system-provided) text that is contained on any of the pages will be displayed in a Spanish translation provided by PTCFast.com.

To provide completely translated displays for Spanish-speaking parents, however, you also need to provide a Spanish version of all of your "custom" text that you inserted.

The way you do this is as follows: in the appropriate text box, you add two pound signs "##" and then your Spanish text.

For example, one piece of custom text you provide to the system is the location of the conference. If your English text says “Room 232 in the main building” you might instead now write “Room 232 in the main building##Habitación 232 en el edificio principal”

The user provided text that you can translate is found in the following places: four elements on the Emails page (location of conference, what to do if user does not have internet, final sentence to add to letter, and who letters are from), one item on the Reports/Deadlines page (what the system should tell parents if all the appointments are taken) and two elements on the Manage Conference page (special requests, and intro to the School Web Page if chosen.)

Note that you do not have to provide Spanish translation of all of these elements. If you just put in the English, that will be displayed, and it may suffice to communicate with your Spanish speaking parents. Also if you should happen to decide to turn off the Spanish Translation Option checkbox after adding text separated out by ##s, that won't be a problem; even with that option off, the system will not display anything after the ##.

4.5 BASIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATOR USING THE SYSTEM TO SET UP MULTIPLE CONFERENCES FOR AN ENTIRE SCHOOL (OR GROUP OF TEACHERS).

If you are setting up multiple conferences for a school, the “normal” approach is to set up one account for the school, with separate conferences created under this account. (You add new conferences from the Manage Conference Screen.) However, some schools actually let each individual teacher create their own account (in that case, the instructions in Section 4.3 above present what each teacher will be doing individually.) The remainder of this section is devoted to the “normal approach”: a single school account with multiple conferences.

Signing up as an individual teacher with one conference is exceptionally easy. From the home page, click on Teacher/School Login and look for “To Create New Account”. System will offer button to Create Free PTCFast Account”. Click on this. Sign up under First Time Users, providing email, password, school name and location, and click Login to Create Conference. System will ask you to indicate whether you are signing up for a One-Time Free Trial Semester or a Regular Account (If you have not used the system before, you are welcome to choose the Free Trial Semester.)

The system will now ask you for your email and a password. This is your account access information. It will also ask for your school name and location and to indicate if you will want your parents to be able to access Spanish text (which you would provide—see below).

The next step will be for the system to ask you how you wish to communicate with your parents. The three basic options were discussed above—see Section 4.3. As an individual teacher you probably want to select Conference Code option (the School Web Page is a bit more than what you really need for one conference).

Finally it asks you for the name of your conference. Probably you will want to include your own name in the conference name, e.g., “Parent/Teacher Conference with Ms. Jones”. Also indicate the grade level.

When you are ready, click on [Enter my choice and create Time Blocks](#) button.

At this point you are ready to create some “time blocks”. A time block is a set of consecutive appointments. For example, one time block might run from 9 AM to noon, and might consist of 3 15-minute appointments per hour with 5 minute breaks between appointments. If you want to have some breaks (e.g., for lunch), it is best to create one time block before lunch and a second time block after lunch. (Some users set up one big time block running the whole day, and then make a fake appointment for “LUNCH”. This will probably work OK, but it has some disadvantages, so we recommend not doing it that way.)

To create a time block, first select the date. You can create a time block as much as two years in advance. Then pick the start time for the whole block, the length of each appointment and the gap between the end of one appointment and the start of the next. So for example, if you want 3 15-minute appointments per hour with 5 minute breaks, set Length of Meeting = 15 minutes and Gap = 5 minutes.

Some users want to set up appointments that start at “funny times” like 2:07. Yes, you can do that! In the Start Time menu, click on “Other”. The system will provide a blank in which you can enter e.g., 2:07 PM (don’t forget the AM or PM!).

Before submitting your first time block, you also need to select the end of the last appointment in the time block. The dropdown menu will calculate the potential end times—pick the one that works for you.

When you have made all these selections, click on [Submit Selected Times and Display Schedule](#). The system will now display all the time blocks you have selected—along with options to Add New Block, Edit Block, Delete Block. In the Time Blocks display, you’ll also notice a place where the name of the parent can be displayed. Since you just created the Time Block, and have not launched the conference yet, all the appointment times will appear as “unfilled”.

Continue to make as many time block as you need for your conference. When you are all done with that, click on [Done with Times](#).

When you indicate you are done with time blocks, starting in 2017 the system checks to be sure that you either have a Free Trial Semester status for that semester, or that you have paid for semester usage for that semester. If you have not, it will offer to route you to the Billing page where you can do so. After paying, you can always go back to the Billing page (available via Manage) and obtain a printable invoice or a PDF invoice.

After Time Blocks, the next screen you see is Notice Settings. Here you are reminded of what choice you made about how your parents will sign up. This screen also allows you to print letters to send parents telling them how to use the system. For users setting up multiple conferences, however, you may wish to create all your conferences first and then come back here (or go to Manage) to obtain these letters to parents.

In addition to [Done with Times](#), you’ll notice several other actions available to you here on Time Blocks. You can view the schedule as parents will see it, and you can also send appointment reminders to all parents, and print a schedule. For now, don’t worry about these options, but once your conferences are launched, these may come in handy.

After Time Blocks, the next screen you see is Notice Settings. Here you make a fundamental choice about how your parents will sign up. We recommend the first option, called “Simple No-Code Option”. Here, you provide parents with general access to the webpage where they sign up for appointments. The second option, called “Parent Code Option” is a more complex process, where you send each parent a specific code allowing them to sign up. If you are very worried about prank sign-ups, you may wish to choose this option. However, there are several disadvantages to making this selection, and we do not generally recommend it.

The next screen is called Emails. Here you provide some basic information that will be incorporated in emails that are displayed to parents when they sign up, and contained within the reminder emails they will receive before their appointments. We think you’ll find the questions pretty self-explanatory.

The Reports and Deadlines page allows you to specify how often you want the system to communicate with you. We recommend asking for frequent updates, and the default selections there do that. This page also allows administrators to provide the email of a teacher (or other colleague) associated with a particular conference, designating them to receive updates about the conference. Please read the options in the Designate Colleagues section very carefully. If you are an individual teacher, this section will probably not affect you.

If you have made the required selections on all the previous pages, you are now able to view our Terms of Service and launch your conference. On the Launch page, you will be told about anything that needs to be finalized prior to launch.

If you are setting up a whole set of conferences, you may wish to set all of them up before you launch any of them. That’s fine—the Manage Conference page has a “mass launch” feature that will let you launch a whole group at once, when you are ready. So when you’re done with one conference, go to Manage Conference page and click on Set Up New Conference. The system will allow you to use an earlier-created conference as a model.

Once you have launched your conferences, parents can begin to sign up. You need to tell them how to do this (PTCFast does not yet have your parents’ email addresses so it cannot contact them directly.) The system will describe several options for you.

For school administrators, you will probably want to use the School Web Page Option. This option is available on Manage Conference page. Choose “Check here if you wish to use and link to this page.”

Once you have launched your conference, parents can begin to sign up. You need to tell them how to do this (PTCFast does not have your parents’ email addresses so it cannot contact them directly.) The system will describe several options for you.

You are welcome to come back and log in any time you want, either before or after you launch. The system will start you off in the Manage Conference page. Visit TimeBlocks to see the appointment times (after launch, this will show you the names of parents who have signed up, if any.)

4.5.1 Communicating with Parents.

The next (critical) step is to let parents know what steps they must follow to register and sign up. You have two options:

A. The simplest is to enable the School Web Page (SWP). If selected, PTCFast will create a web page where parents can select their conference(s) and register. The option to select this webpage is found on the Manage Conference screen, where it is described in detail (please read the text since it contains some important details). If you enable this option, you simply tell all your parents to go to the web link (provided for you on Manage Conference) - the rest is self-explanatory. Many schools find that the simplest way they can do this is by placing a link to the School Web Page on the school's website and directing parents there. (Note that the SWP option is not available to schools which choose the "Parent Code" option on the Notifications page—for many users, that's just one more reason to pick the Simple No-Code Option on Notifications.) One thing to keep in mind when using the SWP is that you need to name each of your conferences in a way that will enable parents to tell which conferences to sign up for. (You can always edit the conference names from a link on Manage Conference screen.)

B. If you do not want to use the School Web Page option for some reason, you will need to give parents another way to select their school and conference. We do this with what we call Parent Letters. After you Launch, you will see a link on Manage Conference called "View/print the letters that you will hand out to parents". This will bring up copies of letters that you need to send to parents, typically via backpack mail, with directions on signing up. These letters give parents a procedure to go straight to the appropriate conference.

5 FEES AND PAYMENT

PTCFast.com ran for seven years as a free system, with a constantly increasing set of features. As usage and complexity have grown, so have our expenses. We remain committed to providing a highly affordable scheduling option for schools and individual teachers (backed up by a strong and simple privacy policy and with no ads displayed anywhere on the system), but it is no longer feasible to keep the site completely free. Starting in Fall 2017, a very modest user fee will be charged for the use of the system. The fee is \$50.00 per school per semester for an account that lets you create as many conferences as you need for your school. Individual teachers setting up just one or a few conferences can pay \$4.00 per semester per conference. Some schools prefer to have all their teachers set up individual accounts and manage their own conferences. To make this method of use as convenient as possible, the system will allow schools to buy sets of 10 coupons for \$35.00. Each ticket comes with a number and a passcode, and you simply have to provide the ticket number and passcode to a teacher and they can enter that into the system and create their own conference (all of this can be accessed from the Manage page).

What do we mean by a "semester"? PTCFast defines Fall Semester as the period running from July 1 to December 31, inclusive, and the Spring Semester as the time period running from January 1 to June 30. When you create a time block in a given semester, the system checks to make sure you have paid for that semester.

We offer one Free Trial Semester for any school that wants to try out running their conferences using the system for one semester and see how it works for them. After doing that, a user can convert to a regular account. (Note that Free Trial Semester is a fully functioning run with real conferences and real parents for one semester; it should not be confused with the Free Demo Account that we also offer. Free Demo Accounts let you run your own tests of the system (e.g., signing up parents, getting parent reminder letters) albeit with limitations that make it unsuitable for running a “real conference”. See below for more details on Demo Accounts.)

As a courtesy to our long-time supporters and early adopters, we are allowing schools that have used our system prior to Fall 2017 to obtain a free trial semester for Fall 2017. All existing account holders have been automatically signed up for a Free Trial Semester status for that semester.

6 ORGANIZING CONFERENCES FOR SCHOOLS WITH TEAM TEACHING

There are a number of different team teaching models, and each of them requires a somewhat different arrangement. The simplest model is where parents meet with an entire teaching team as a whole. Naturally, for this, you don’t need to do anything special except name the conference with the name of the team (rather than just one of the teachers). If you pick the School Web Page option (described above), always be sure to use conference names that will make sense to parents, since the parents will need to pick the appropriate conference(s) from the list of all the conferences you have set up at your school.

6.1.1 Each Parent Meets Individually with The Team’s Teachers in Assembly-Line Fashion

Suppose a team consists of Teachers A, B, and C, and you want each parent to meet first with A, then B, then C, each for 10 minutes. How would you do this? You could set up your first conference for the Team with a timeblock consisting of 30 minute appointments starting on the hour (e.g., 9 AM, 9:30 AM, 10 AM, and so forth). Then click “Add new Timeblock” but select times that are offset by ten minutes from the hour (i.e., appointments at 9:10 AM, 9:40 AM, 10:10 AM, and so forth). When you do this, the software will warn you that you are setting up timeblocks that overlap. That’s no problem for you, and you can even tell it to not remind you again. Finally, create the third timeblock, with appointments at 9:20 AM, 9:50 AM, etc. So now the team has 30-minute timeblocks starting every 10 minutes.

So now if a parent picks the timeblock starting at, e.g., 9:10 AM, they meet first with Teacher A for 10 minutes, who then sends them on to Teacher B for 10 minutes, and finally they move on to Teacher C for 10 minutes.

6.1.2 Parents Meet with the Team as a Group

Suppose you want to provide for multiple parents to meet with a group of teachers (or with an individual teacher) at the same time—what then? This is easy to set up. Suppose you have four teachers in the team, and you want four parents in each 30-minute meeting. In each single conference you simply create four separate timeblocks with exactly the same start times, durations, and end times. For example, each of the four timeblocks might start at 9 AM and end at 12:00 PM, with a new meeting every 30 minutes. As you set up each time block (after the first one), the software will warn you that you are setting up overlapping time blocks. Just tell it that that is OK, and it won't bother you any further.

7 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PARENTS' INTERACTIONS WITH THE SYSTEM

7.1.1 Parents Who Don't Have Internet Access

Most schools tell us that even if a lot of parents lack internet access, using PTCFast.com still saves an lot of time, because it is easy for teachers or administrators to log into the system and create appointments manually. The Parent Letters contain instructions (text specified by you from the Emails screen) for the parents about whom to call to schedule an appointment manually. At some schools, this is done by an administrative staffer; at others, parents call the teacher to schedule. For administrators who are logged into the system, click on Time Blocks to see the list of slots; to sign up parents manually, just click on unfilled. When you do that, you can put in parent emails (when they have them) and trigger email confirmations. If the teachers will be doing the manual scheduling, you need to check boxes 1 or 2 on the "Designate Colleagues..." section of Reports/Deadlines Screen.

7.1.2 Scheduling for Siblings

Some parents have more than one child to schedule, either in different classrooms or (less commonly) in the same class. Parents can register just once and sign up for multiple appointments for multiple children.

If you set up your account in the most common way (all teachers/conferences set up on one account, with School Web Page selected for the parent communications option—see Notifications page), this is very easy. When the parent visits the School Web Page, they pick all the conferences they want to set up appointments for, specifying the first child's name. Once the parent has registered and clicked on a link in the confirmation email they receive, they will see a large display showing the available times for all the conferences they have picked. After they finish that selection process, they are offered the chance to select times for another child, and so forth.

If you don't pick the School Web Page option, but instead pick the Class Code option, you will instead need to provide parents with letters containing a class code for each of their conferences. In this case the parent only needs to register once, and they can pick all their appointments by providing the class codes for subsequent appointments after the first one.

7.1.3 Parents Contacting PTCFast Customer Support

From time to time, parents click on _and send us an email saying “please cancel my appointment” or “I want an appointment for 4:30 PM on October 15.” When we get such emails we advise the parent that we provided the software the school is using to organize their conferences, and that they need to contact the school directly.

8 RE-USING THE SYSTEM FROM SEMESTER TO SEMESTER

One of the great conveniences of the PTCFast.com is that once you have set up one set of conferences on the system, setting up the next set of conferences can be even easier. Basically, you can re-use your old conferences (avoiding the trouble of re-entering information like the teacher’s name, the report/deadlines selections, and so forth.) When you log back into the system after not using it for more than a few weeks, it will offer you the chance to purge parent appointments from any old conferences you may have. In order to facilitate easy set-up of your next round of conferences, we recommend selecting this. Once you have done that, you just need to follow three easy steps to set up the next round of conferences.

8.1 FOUR STEPS FOR QUICK CONFERENCE UPDATING

- Select any one of your old conferences to serve as a schedule template (you do this on Manage).
- Go to the Time Blocks screen for this conference. If there are old appointments, you’ll need to use “Delete All Appointments” to wipe them out. Then adjust the dates/times to create the schedule you want for the new semester.
- Next, go to the Manage Conferences page and click on the “” link. As per the instructions there, click on "Copy Schedule from one conference to others" link. The system will then ask you from which conference you want to copy the schedule: choose the template conference you just edited in the preceding steps above.
- Finally, you will be asked which conferences you want to copy the template schedule onto: click on **all** of your old conferences. Then click to "Proceed...". Presto! Your conferences now all have the new updated schedule. Note that they will still have all the same option selections that you made last semester (teacher emails, notification settings, etc.). If you need to change those settings, select each conference in turn (from Manage), then go to the appropriate page and make the change you want.

Now the new set of conferences are just waiting to be launched (and you can launch them all in one click from the Manage Conferences page, "Launch all conferences" link.)

9 SOME GROUND RULES

Privacy Rules. In addition to being completely ad-free, our system guards the privacy of users as much as we can. We only contact parents with information specific to their signups. We do not share information with anyone outside of PTCFast.com. We do not sell lists of teachers' or administrators' contact information, email, etc. And we use 256-bit encryption https for privacy protection.

Rules for Free Trial Semester. As a courtesy to early adopters, we are allowing our prior users to have a free trial semester in Fall, 2017, even though they have used the system in the past. Returning users will be automatically signed up for this free semester. After Fall, 2017, however, signups for Free Trial Semesters will be approved only when our records show that no teacher or administrator from that school has used the system in the past. (If this limitation seems inappropriate in your situation for some reason, you can write us at info@ptcfast.com and explain.)