The Ultranet Parent Portal

The Ultranet parent portal is a secure web environment where parents can access information that keeps them informed of their child's learning progress and attendance record. It also provides easy online access to additional resources and information that the school makes available for parents.

The benefit of the parent portal is that it serves as a single point of access for anything to do with a child's learning. Notices, calendars, reports, timetables, assignments, attendance, assessment reporting, communication and discussion forums, are all available in one convenient location which parents can access anywhere, anytime from their personal dashboard.

The Dashboard: key information at a glance

Messaging and user updates

Automatic reminders and alerts upon each login, including access to a built-in messaging system for communication with school and teachers.

Overview of child's recent activity

Personalised news feed updating on recent activity in the child's personal learning environment and/or student records.

Attendance and homework summary

Summary of recent attendance records and list of learning activities set within the virtual classrooms and pending completion.

Access to pages

Web-pages can set up and linked to easily, such as an online common room where parents can access resources and information of general interest. Using the built-in modules, parents can also participate in discussion forums on topics of interest or for enhancing community input.

Easy navigation

Quick access to details school records, class activity, attendance information and assessment history.

Interoperability

Data made available through the Ultranet parent portal is updated in a near real-time manner, utilising the SMS-LMS interoperability synchronisation process. One of the key benefits of sharing data in this way is that one system—the SMS—can serve as the master custodian of student related data, thus eliminating the double entry of data. Caregivers and students also have ongoing access to records of student learning and achievement that traditionally are only delivered in printed reports or at parent teacher meetings.

Learning Partners

Using the online portal improves the flow of information between parents, students and teachers and increases direct family interaction with the school. This facilitates parents having a greater involvement with their child's learning and creates a greater opportunity for parents to have learning conversations with their children, moving towards greater ownership of that learning and sharing the responsibility for it.

"Our school often has difficulty persuading reluctant parents to enter the school gates and take an active part in the learning experiences of their children. We saw the parent portal as an excellent opportunity to encourage parents to more actively follow the learning journeys of their children and improve the communication between home and school.

The ability of students to actively track their learning progress through assessment information has also been a key driving factor behind the success of this project. Students have appreciated being able to view their assessment information online (in some instances before staff have even informed them of results) and monitor their own attendance electronically".
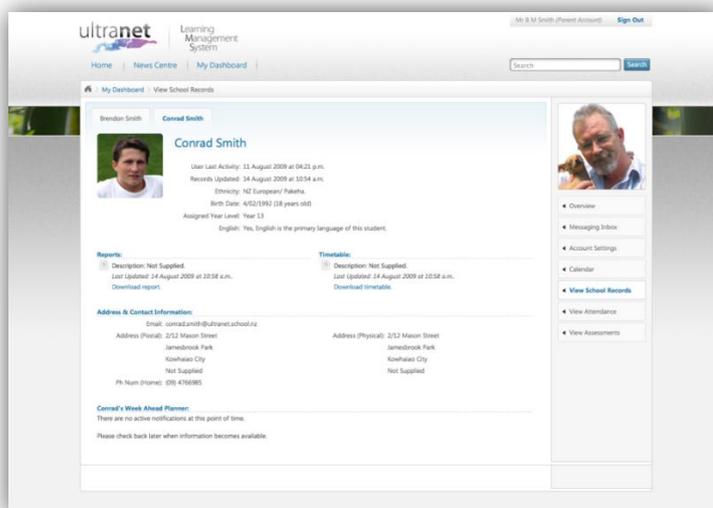
Daniel Wilson
Deputy Principal, Manurewa High School

School Records

The student's address and contact information as recorded in the SMS is displayed in the parent portal. This enables parents to verify the data or notify the school when the demographic information changes and records need to be updated.
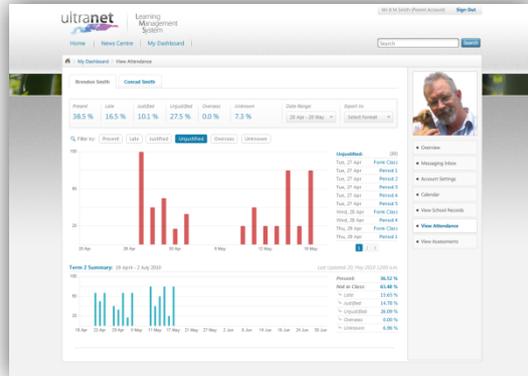
Also in this area, the student's report and timetable can be downloaded if the school elects to transfer these files from the SMS through to the LMS.

Attendance Data

Attendance data is organised into two sections: a date range summary as specified by the user and historical summaries by term.
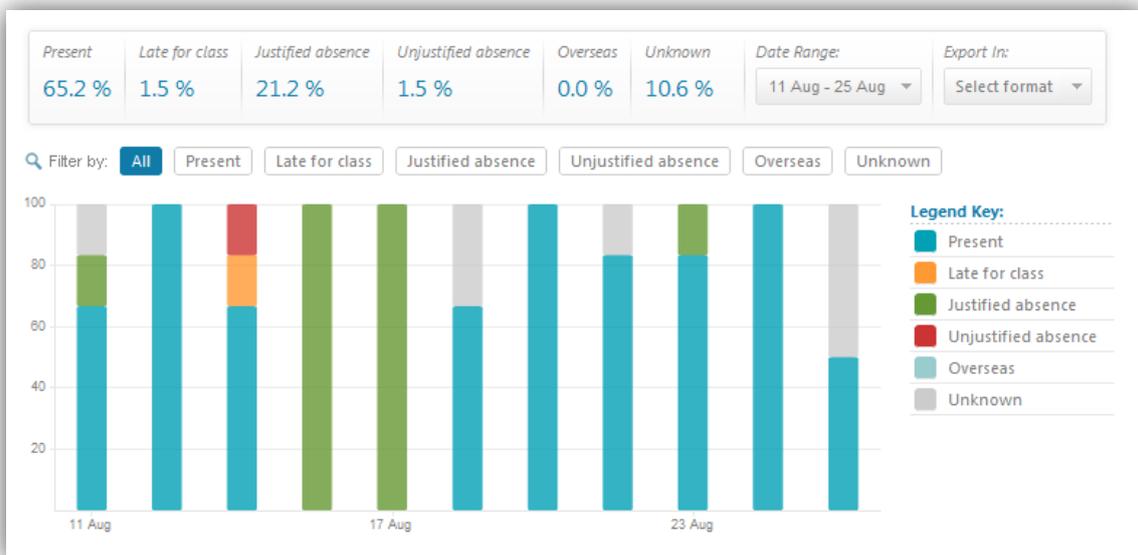

The display includes a bar chart representing daily attendance and percentage summaries. Colour-coded tags indicate if attendance records are for justified or unjustified absences.

Via the online portal, parents are able to monitor attendance without having to contact the school. If system synchronisation occurs at the end of the school day, then theoretically parents can have access to the day's attendance records on the same evening.

Where contact with the school is required, parents can message the school to either clarify attendance records or determine what course content has been missed.
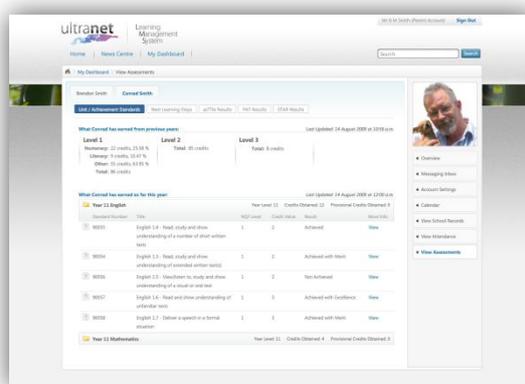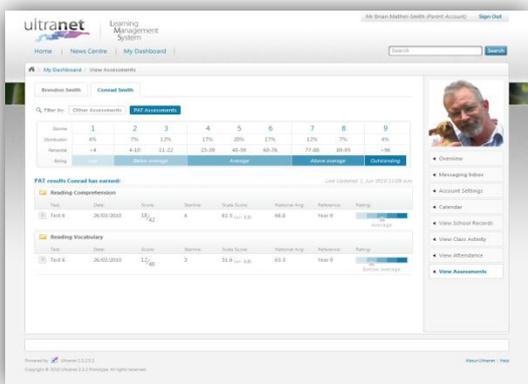
Planned future development of the parent portal will enable Ultranet to be configured to automatically send an email to parents whenever an unjustified absence is recorded. This will provide parents with an 'alert' option, should they choose to be notified, as well as a reminder for parents to provide a note to explain legitimate/justified absence.
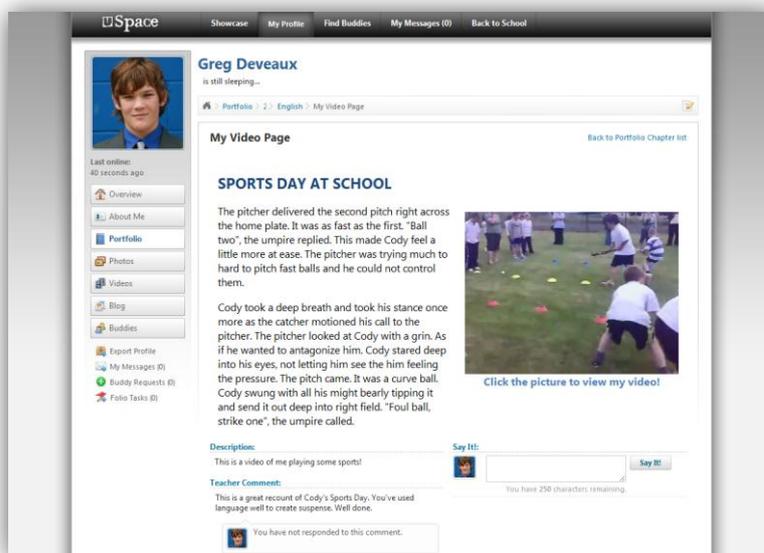
Achievement Information

Ultranet provides parents with two ways to engage with their child's progress in learning:

- A record of formal assessment is provided in the parent portal using data supplied via the SMS-LMS interoperability schema.
- Parents can be granted direct access to their child's ePortfolio, media galleries, blog posts and virtual classrooms.

Assessment records for different types of assessment are presented on tabs organised by test type. Tabs only appear if the relevant data is transferred from the SMS. Currently the schema allows for the following categories of data to be transferred: asTTle, PAT, STAR, Unit/Achievement Standards and 'Other' assessments—the latter being miscellaneous assessments that do not use a standardised assessment format.

In the ePortfolio included within their child's personal learning environment (PLE) in uSpace, parents can view and interact with samples of work that provide evidence of achievement. The ability to contribute comments and feedback also encourages parents to engage with their child's learning and to provide support where required, all within a secure and engaging online social environment.

Additionally, because parents can be provided with access to the online classroom by the teachers themselves, parents can keep in touch with key events, homework tasks, assignment timelines and the content being covered by their child in class.