TOOLS

TOOLS is an acronym for the '**T**imeTabler **O**ptions **O**n-**L**ine **S**ystem'.

This is a system to allow parents/students to select their optional subject Choices on-line, using the internet instead of the traditional paper method.
Apart from looking more modern, this method means that you don't have to type the students' choices into *Options* – the parents/students do it for you.

Alternatively, the School's Careers Guidance Counsellor may make the entries, while interviewing each pupil.

In order to use this system, you may need the assistance of your IT Manager. A MySQL database and some PHP files have to be placed on the school's Web-Server so that the parents/students can gain access. We provide the MySQL and PHP files, with documentation explaining how to install them. *Alternatively, easier,* the system can be hosted for you, free or for a nominal fee, see more details at: www.mistservices.co.uk/timetabling/tools/ and see page 17.

When you click on the TOOLS button in *Options* it shows you this screen:

Step 1 in the screen above is this document.
Step 2 gives full details of how to install the PHP files with a MySQL database, but see page 17.

This document takes you through Steps 3 – 9 of the list above.
Before starting we suggest you read pages 6 - 9 so you know which model you are aiming for.
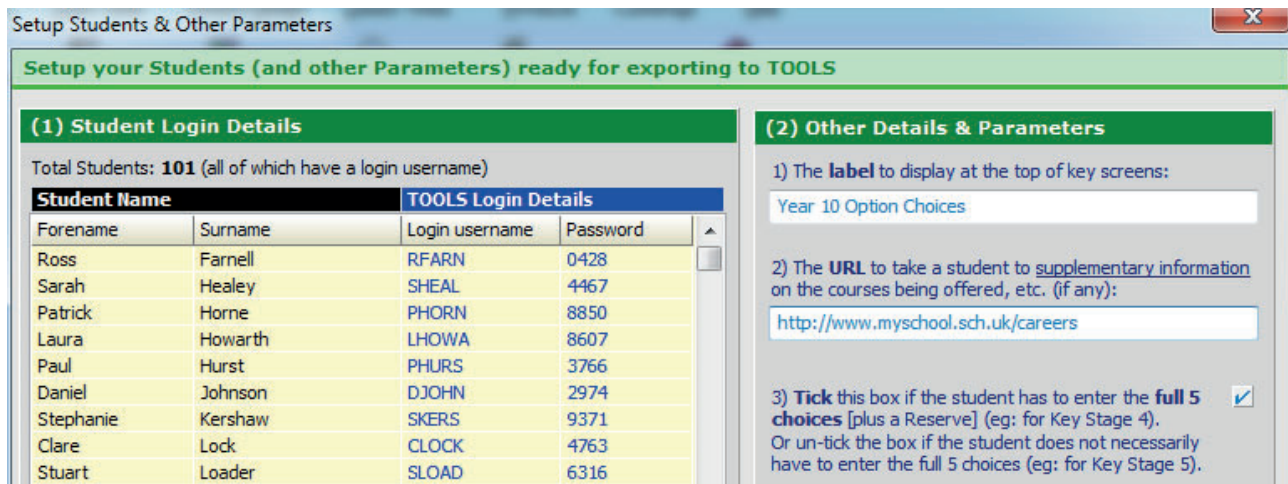
(If some of the students are to choose slightly differently see: www.timetabler.com/SupportCentre/Using-Pathways.pdf)

Step 3

Click on the **Setup Students & Parameters** button on the TOOLS Screen (shown on the previous page).

The Students in the current population (that you have previously entered or imported into *Options*) are shown in a list, together with a UserName and a Password/PIN generated by *Options*.

If the username and password columns are empty then click on: **Assign (new) Usernames & Passwords**

Their UserName and Password/PIN will be given to each Student/Parent (see Step 6 below), and then used by them to access the on-line system (see Step 7 below). (This username and password are created by *Options* for this purpose only and bear no relation to any existing passwords.)
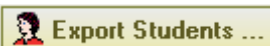
At the right-hand side you can enter:

- A Label that will be displayed at the top of the screens that the students/parents will visit, so that they are sure which students these option choices apply to.
  For example, 'Year 10 Option Choices' or 'Lower Sixth Option Choices'.

- The URL of any web-page/portal that you think would be helpful to show the students/parents.
  For example, your school's IAG/Careers site for this age-group, or a government web-site such as: https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx
  This customizable hyperlink allows you to customize TOOLS for your school.

- Specify whether the student has to enter the full specified Number of choices (eg. for Key Stage 4) or not necessarily the full number (eg. for Key Stage 5 or 'Sixth Form').

Note 1 : Check that all this information is *accurate* before moving on! It's not easy to change later.

Note 2 : If you want the students to also choose 1 (or 2) Reserve Choices, make you sure you have specified this on the Populations Screen in *Options*, before doing the next step.

Step 4

Click on the **Export Students ...** button on the TOOLS Screen (shown on the previous page). This exports the Name, UserName, and password/PIN of each **Student** to a file, ready for you to import that data into the TOOLS on-line system (see Step 5, starting on the next page).

Click also on the **Export Subjects ...** button. This exports the list of **Subjects** on offer to a file, ready for you to import into the TOOLS on-line system (see Step 5 starting on the next page).

Step 5

Now access the TOOLS system in your browser, by typing the correct URL (*for example:*
www.myschool.sch.uk/tools). You will see the Log-in Screen:

On the first occasion that you visit, enter the defaults :   Username: admin
                                                                   Password: password

This gives you access to the **Control Panel**:

continued

The Control Panel

Admin
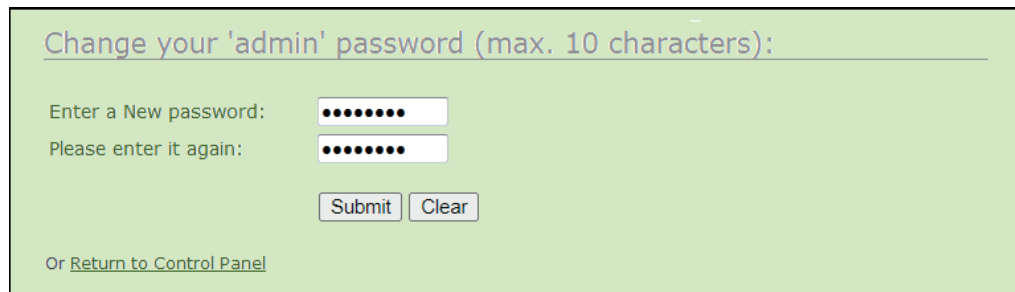
Section 1

This allows you to change your password if you wish.
The default password is 'password'. (The user-name is always 'admin'.)

Change your 'admin' password (max. 10 characters):

Enter a New password: ••••••••
Please enter it again: ••••••••

[Submit] [Clear]

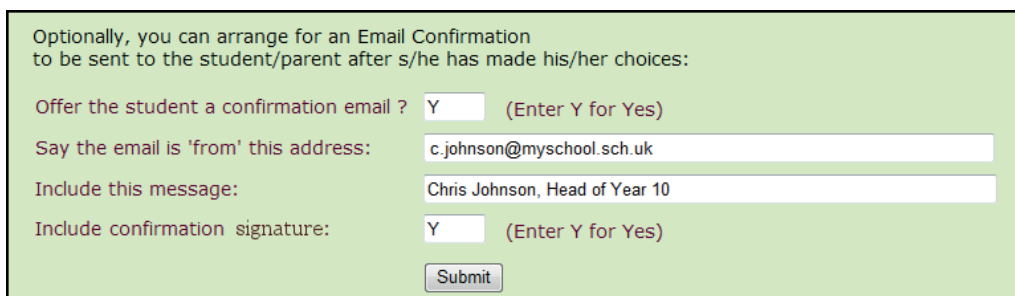Or Return to Control Panel

Section 2

This allows you to offer the Parent/Student an Email confirming their Choices [at the end of Step 7].
If you decide to offer this, you'll need to set up the message as shown below.
We suggest you view this message during Testing [see page 11] before deciding on any changes.

The sample screen below shows some suggestions for the entries:
('confirmation signature = Y' asks the Parent to print, sign & return the email)

Optionally, you can arrange for an Email Confirmation
to be sent to the student/parent after s/he has made his/her choices:

Offer the student a confirmation email ?   Y   (Enter Y for Yes)
Say the email is 'from' this address: c.johnson@myschool.sch.uk
Include this message: Chris Johnson, Head of Year 10
Include confirmation signature: Y   (Enter Y for Yes)
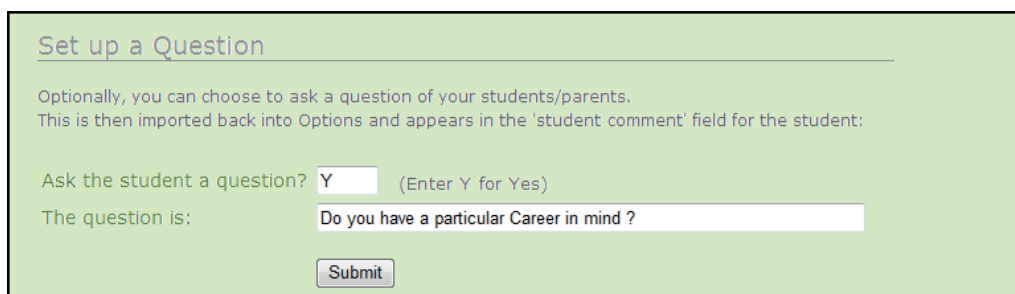
[Submit]

Section 3

This allows you to specify a Question that will be put to the student/parent immediately after they
have made their choices. If you decide to offer this, you'll need to set up the message see below.
We suggest you view this message during Testing [see page 11] to check what it looks like.

Set up a Question

Optionally, you can choose to ask a question of your students/parents.
This is then imported back into Options and appears in the 'student comment' field for the student:

Ask the student a question? Y   (Enter Y for Yes)
The question is: Do you have a particular Career in mind ?

[Submit]

Messages might be like:
"Say if you have a particular Career in mind."
"Will you be returning in the Sixth Form next year?"

Section 4
Use this to load in the file of Students' Names that you produced in *Options* at Step 4 above.
The file that you need to load in is called TOOLS_Students.txt

Importing the list of Students in this population

To import the Students, you need a file that is exported from *TT-Options*.
The name of this file is : **TOOLS_Students.txt**

You may have this file on this machine or on a memorystick.

Use the browse button to find this file:

File of Students : C:\OptWin\Export\TOOLS_Students.txt   Browse...

Import these Students now

Section 5
Then do similarly to load in the Subjects that are being offered to these students.
The file that you need to load in is called TOOLS_Offered_Subjects.txt

Importing the Subjects to be offered

To import the Subjects that are to be offered to the students, you need a file
that is exported from *TT-Options*.
The name of this file is : **TOOLS_Offered_Subjects.txt**

You may have this file on this machine or on a memorystick.

Use the browse button to find this file:

File of Subjects : C:\OptWin\Export\TOOLS_Offered_Subjects.   Browse...

Import the Subjects now

At this stage the Students' Names, and the Subjects you are offering them, have been entered into the TOOLS System.

The next step is set up the Model that you want. These are explained on the next 4 pages, and at:
www.timetabler.com/PDFs/WhitePaper-on-Options-&-TOOLS.pdf

Then we strongly recommend that you **test** the system, see the panel on page 11.

Section 6   Setting up 'Choose ONE' sections

On the next 4 pages we discuss 4 of the commonest models and how to set them up.

A Free Choice model
Students/Parents can choose (the correct number) from a list, with no restrictions.
They can add 1 or 2 Reserve Choices if you've allowed that in *Options*.

B Choose ONE subject
ie. a group of subjects are listed, from which students/parents must choose ONE and only ONE.
This would be suitable, *for example*, if you need the students/parents to choose which foreign language to study in Year 8 or S2.

C Choose ONE followed by Free choices   ie. Model B followed by Model A.
This is suitable for the common requirement, *for example*, "You must choose ONE Humanities subject and then 3 other subjects".
Alternatively you might have two (or more) "Choose ONE" sections followed by Free Choice.
For example, choose ONE Humanities subject, then choose ONE MFL, then a free choice.

D Several "Choose ONE" sections with no free choice.
ie. the students/parents are forced to choose one subject in each section, with a few subjects offered each time. This is useful for schools running the IB Diploma. More details on page 9.

When you start Section 6 by clicking on: | 6 | Set up / Change "Choose ONE" Sections or edit subjects offered. |

you are asked to enter the number of 'Choose ONE' sections (depending on whether you want Model A, B, C, D, etc, see the next pages).

Please enter the number of Sections you require.

Sections: [⬍]

Next

When you click on the **Next** button, you are shown the list of Subjects you have loaded into TOOLS (at section 5 above). For example:

Add a Section

You can enable/disable free choices here. Ticked subjects will be shown to students for free choice selection. Unticked subjects will not be shown.

Tick all   Untick all   Tick all that are NOT in sections

☑ Art   ☑ Food Technology   ☑ History   ☑ Spanish
☑ Child Dev'ment ☑ French   ☑ Info Technology ☑ Materials Tech
☑ German   ☑ Geography   ☑ Music
☑ Drama   ☐ Graphics   ☑ P.E.

Save

This screen allows you to omit some subjects.
In this example 'Graphics' will not be shown to the User.

When you click **Save** you are shown a summary:

The student will be presented with this list of free choice subjects:

Art	Food Technology	Info Technology	Materials Tech
Child Dev'ment	French	Music	
German	Geography	P.E.	
Drama	History	Spanish	

Edit

To delete all the Sections, enter the word DELETE in the box and click confirm: [   ] Confirm deletion
Or to simply Edit (or Delete) the existing Sections, click "Edit".

Return to the Control Panel

The lower part of this screen allow you to Delete any screens for Models A, B, C, D, that you have entered but now want to start again, *for example*, if you want to experiment.

Model A   Sections: [0 ▲▼]

If you enter **zero** for the number of 'Choose ONE' sections (see the previous page) then your students/parents are given a single Free-Choice List to enter their Choices.

For example, students/parents may see:

They enter their Choices via 1, 2, 3...

They can also enter 1, or 2, Reserve Choices if you've allowed that, in *Options*.

When they click 'Submit' they are asked to confirm their choices, or they can go back and change them (in this latter case, if they alter things they can click on 'Reset' to return to their earlier choices).

See also page 13.

See page 11 for how to **Test** that it's giving you what you want.

Laura Norder High School

Choices for: Jessica Booth 9L

Click here for an example.   Click here for course information.

Step 1 of 2
Start > Free choice (with reserve) > Confirmation

Please enter your 5 choices (1,2,3, etc) in the box for that subject:
To mark your Reserve choice, put 'R' by that subject.
To mark your Second reserve choice, put 'S' by that subject.

Subject	Choice
Art (Art)	2
Child Dev'ment (CD)	
German (De)	
Drama (Dr)	4
Food Technology (Fo)	
French (Fr)	1
Geography (Gg)	R
History (Hi)	3
Info Technology (IT)	
Music (Mu)	5
P.E. (PE)	
Spanish (Sp)	
Materials Tech (Te)	S

[Submit] [Reset this form] [Clear this form]

Note 1   Add a Subject
If you find at a late stage that you need to add a Subject into TOOLS (that was not listed in *Options*) then you can do so at: 8   The Subjects being offered to the students   ⊠   **Manually Add Subject**
(Do not do this unless you really have to.)

Note 2   Modify the name of a Subject
If you wish to change the displayed Name of subject [but not its abbreviation], so that the displayed name is more friendly to the students/parents, then you can do this at:
8   The Subjects being offered to the students   ⊠   **Rename**   (see page 10).

Note 3   'Delete' a Subject (apparently), so it is not displayed
A Subject can't be Deleted entirely within TOOLS, but you can easily ensure that it is not displayed to students/parents, see the 'Graphics' example on the previous page.

Note 4   Omitting confusing Subjects
This 'delete' (in Note 3) can be very useful.
For example, in a Scottish school you may have entered (in *Options*) a Subject label like 'Hist45', knowing that at some stage you may have to combine a History N4 group with a History N5 group (using the 'Amalgamate' features in *Options*).
But you wouldn't want this 'Hist45' to be displayed as a choice for pupils/parents, so you just un-tick it, like this:

☑ History N4
☐ Hist45
☑ History N5

Model B   Sections: 1 ⬍

You can use Section 6 of the Admin Panel to set up a single "Choose ONE" List. ie. a group of subjects listed, from which students/parents must choose ONE and only ONE.

For example, if you specify only 1 subject choice for this Population in **Options**, and then specify one section in this Section 6 then you'd see a screen like:

Set up / Change "Choose one" sections   You have the following sections:

Header	Subjects		Closing sentence
Choose ONE of the following Languages:	German	Spanish	This is the language you will study in Year 8, in addition to French.

There will be no Free Choices.   Edit

and the students/parents would then see:

In this example the students are choosing a second MFL to study in Year 8.

The 'Header' (before) and the 'Closing' (after) sentences say whatever you choose to type.

Step 1 of 2

Start > Choice 1 > Confirmation

Choose ONE of the following Languages:

○ German (De)   ○ Spanish (Sp)

This is the language you will study in Year 8, in addition to French.   Next

Model C   Sections: 1 ⬍

You can mix the two styles. *For example,* you can set up the Population in **Options** with 4 Choices and then use section 6 in the TOOLS Admin Panel to set up one "Choose ONE" section, like this:

Set up / Change "Choose one" sections   You have the following sections:

Header	Subjects		Closing sentence
Choose ONE of the following Humanities Subjects:	Geography	History	If you don't choose History here you can choose it later.

There will also be 3 Free Choices, for the Student to select at the end.
The student will be presented with this list of free choice subjects:

Art	Food Technology	History	P.E.
Child Dev'ment	French	Info Technology	Spanish
Drama	Graphics	Music	Materials Tech

In this example the students/parents would see, on-line,
- first, a "Choose ONE" screen, like the one shown in Model B above,
   with a message saying "If you don't choose History here you can choose it later." (see below).
then
- second, a Free Choice screen, like the one shown in Model A above.

In this example we have chosen History to appear in the "Choose ONE" section and *also* in the Free Choice list (while Geography doesn't), hence the message above. If you could afford another Geography group then it might say "*If you don't choose History, or Geography, here you can choose it later.*". (You can have neither, some, or all, depending on which groups you can staff).

Sections: 2 ⬍

Similarly, for EBacc, you might set up 2 "Choose ONE" sections (*for example,* one with Humanities subjects, and one with Modern Languages subjects) and then the rest Free Choice.

Model D   Sections: 5 ⬍

You can have several "Choose ONE" sections, one after the other, with no Free Choice sections at all.

Example 1 : In a school that always keeps to Fixed Option Blocks/Columns, and wants to use TOOLS to find out how big each of the fixed groups will be this year.
And then perhaps use the Review & Counsel Screen in ***Options*** to counsel students and adjust the group sizes.

Example 2 : In an International Baccalaureate (IB) school which wants to offer the 6 subject areas to its students so that they select only one subject from each area. In this case, for IB, the set up in the Admin Panel might look like this (ie. 5 'Choose ONE' sections and the remainder as the 6th):

Set up / Change "Choose one" sections   You have the following sections:

Header	Subjects		Closing sentence
Choose ONE of the following Group 1 subjects:	French Lit SL Lang+Lit HL Lang+Lit SL	Literature HL Lit & Perf SL Literature SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at Standard Level (SL) and 3 at Higher Level (HL).
Choose ONE of the following Group 2 subjects:	French HL French SL Italian SL	Latin SL Spanish HL Spanish SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Choose ONE of the following Group 3 subjects:	Economics SL Geography HL Geography SL	History HL History SL Psychology SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Choose ONE of the following Group 4 subjects:	Biology HL Biology SL Chemistry HL Chemistry SL	Physics HL Physics SL DesignTech SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Choose ONE of the following Group 5 subjects:	Maths SL Maths HL	MathsStudies SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.
Finally, choose ONE of the following Subjects:	Spanish HL Spanish SL Economics SL Biology HL Biology SL	Chemistry HL Chemistry SL Film SL Music SL Theatre SL	In total you must choose 3 subjects at SL and 3 subjects at HL.

There will be no Free Choices.   Edit

and then the Students/Parents would see, as the first of 6 screens:

T.O.O.L.S »
TimeTabler Options On-Line System

TimeTabler
Options
StaffCover
www.timetabler.com

Laura Norder High School   Grade 12 : International Baccalaureate

To leave without making any choices: Log out

Choices for: Sarah Healey

Extra information: Click here for an example.   Click here for course information.

Step 1 of 7

Start > Choice 1 > Choice 2 > Choice 3 > Choice 4 > Choice 5 > Choice 6 > Confirmation

Choose ONE of the following Group 1 subjects:

○ French Lit SL (FrLit)   ○ Lang+Lit SL (LaLit)   ○ Lit & Perf SL (LitPer)
○ Lang+Lit HL (LaLiS)   ● Literature HL (LitH)   ○ Literature SL (LitS)

In total you must choose 3 subjects at Standard Level (SL) and 3 at Higher Level (HL).

Next

Section 7

Click in Section 7 to see a List of the Students you have loaded. The screen also has a column that shows whether they have yet made their Choices [see 'Patrick Horne', below]:

On this screen you can also 'Undo' their Choices if, for example, the student/parent says that they made a mistake and they want to re-do the selection. (By default TOOLS won't allow them to make their Choices a second time unless you use this 'Undo'.)

Click on 'View/Edit' to change a password, or to 'Suspend' a student (see 'Paul Hurst' above).

Control Panel item 7 lets you allow the Students to change their mind and re-enter new Choices ...but think carefully about the consequences of allowing this to be freely available! See page 18.

Section 8

This screen shows you the Subjects that are on offer to these students, and their current popularity.

The right-hand columns show the number of students who have chosen each Subject (so far) and whether they have chosen them as their 1st/2nd/3rd/4th preference (with any Reserves, R, S).

You can Rename or Add a Subject on this screen (but see page 7).

Section 9

This screen shows you the Choices that the students/parents have made, with any comments.

You can easily see who has not yet made their Choices, and needs chivvying/reminding.

Before allowing student/parents to use the system we **strongly** recommend that you **test** the system, as explained on the next page.

Testing the TOOLS System

After making any changes to the data, the files or the set-up and before sending out the letters to Parents [step 6, on the next page] **we strongly recommend** that you test the system with a few test entries, as follows:

1.
In *Options*, on the TOOLS Screen, click on [Setup Students & Parameters] to see your Students with their UserName & Password/PIN [see Step 3 above].
Make a note of two or three UserNames, with their Password/PIN.

2.
In your browser enter the URL to see the on-line TOOLS Log-in Screen [see Step 5 above].
Now pretend to be one of your Students, by entering their UserName & Password/PIN, as noted above.

You will now see the List of Subjects on offer [see Step 7 below], with 2 hyperlinks above.

- Test these hyperlinks first [the second one is the hyperlink that you entered in Step 3].
- Check that the correct Subjects are shown.

Select some subjects as though you are the student.
Add 'R' if you specified (in *Options*, the Populations Screen) that a 1st Reserve Choice is needed.
Add 'S' if you also specified that a 2nd Reserve is needed. Make a note of your Choices.
Click on the 'Submit' button.

- Check that the correct Choices are shown, in the correct priority order.
If you are also asked a Question (see section 3) enter an answer.
Click the 'Confirm Choices' button.

If you switched on 'Email Confirmation' in the Control Panel [page 4], click on 'Request an email confirmation' and enter your email address, then 'Submit'.
- When the email arrives, look at the message and see if you want to Edit it in the Control Panel [see page 4].

Repeat for another student if you wish to be sure.

3.
Now Log-in again, this time using the Administrator's Username & Password, as in Step 5 above, to see the Control Panel.
On the Control Panel select Section 7 and/or Section 9, and look at the details for the students that you pretended to be.
- Check that the Choices are shown correctly.

Finally, enter Section 7 and click on '**Undo**' to re-set the Students that you pretended to be.
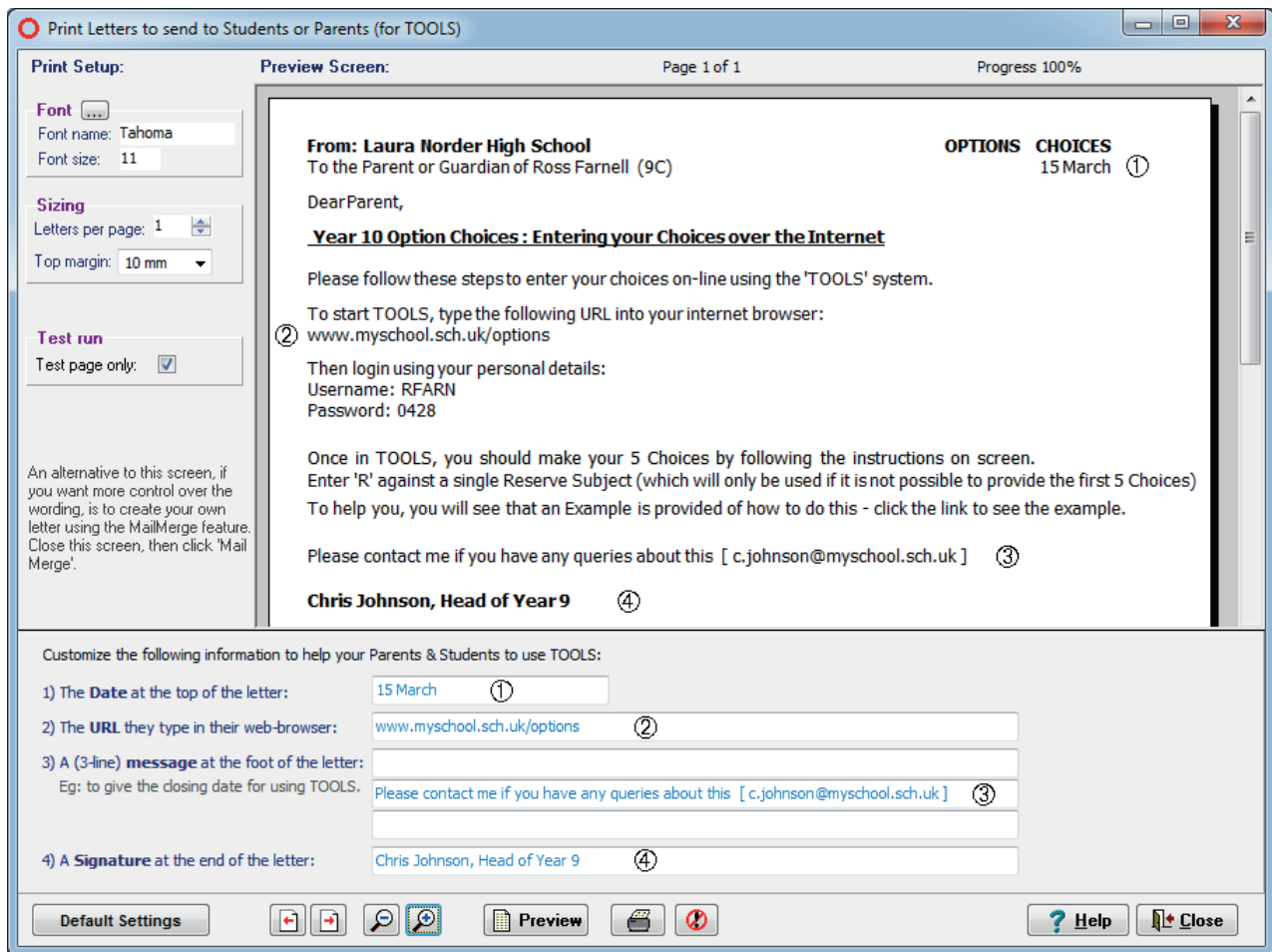
If all has gone well you are now ready to send out to Parents their UserName & Password/PIN, using the letter shown on the next page.

Note:
If you have two (or more) populations, for example one for Year 10 Options and one for Lower 6th Options, then you should install TOOLS in two different folders on your web-server and run them separately. (But you only need one copy of *Options* to export to and import from ...just move between the populations in *Options* as you would normally.)

Step 6

In *Options*, on the TOOLS Screen, click on [🖨 **Print Letters**] .

On this screen click **Preview** to refresh the screen after each change you make.
You can choose the font, and whether to print one or two letters per sheet.

- ☒ Enter the Date, which will appear at the top of the letter, as shown above.

- ☒ Enter the URL that the parents/students must enter into their browser to access the system.
  This is the location where your IT Manager has installed the php files that we provided.
  For example, www.myschool.sch.uk/options or www.myschool.sch.uk/year10
  Make sure this address is accurate [and simple].

- ☒ You can enter an optional message, of up to 3 lines, if you wish.
  For example, if you are providing a separate sheet of paper about any Rules that they must follow [eg. 'You must choose at least one Foreign Language'] then you can enter a message here. Eg. "See also the enclosed guidance sheet." Perhaps you should give a closing date/deadline.

  Alternatively, if your letter (above) fits into the top half of the A4 sheet, then after printing them you could pass them through a photocopier to add your Rules to the lower half of the sheet.

- ☒ Enter a signature, which will probably be seen as the point of contact if they have any queries.

Make a single 'Test' printout, and if all is OK then untick the box, print all the sheets, and send home.

You will need to consider the security issues here: will the letters need to be posted directly to the parents, or could they be given to students without getting lost?

Note 1 : Make sure you follow any local data-protection rules. In the UK you are responsible for ensuring that the rules of the GDPR are applied.

Note 2 : As in all on-line systems there is the possibility of 'fraud'. If you give the student the letter to take home, but s/he loses it, then a stranger or class-mate could maliciously enter the student's Choices. The student/parent and you would be unaware of this ...though you could chivvy students regularly (eg. in Assembly) that they or their parents should be entering their Choices. And after Step 10 you can use the 'Mail-Merge' feature in *Options* to inform parents of the final Choices and which block each Subject is in ...but finding an error at that stage may be too late.

Step 7

When the Parents receive the letter that you composed and printed at Step 6, they will know:
- the URL that they should type into their browser,
- the UserName and Password/PIN for this student,
- an explanation of what they have to do.

When they type the URL in their browser they will see the Log-in Screen shown in Step 5 above.
When they enter the correct User Name & Password/PIN they will see a Choices Screen.
For example, if you set up just a Free Choices Screen as in Model A on page 7:

Laura Norder High School   Year 10 Option Choices

Choices for: Melanie Owen 9C
Extra information: Click here for an example.   Click here for course information.

Step 1
Start > Free form entry (with reserve) > Confirmation

Please enter your 5 choices (1,2,3,etc) in the box for that subject:
To mark your Reserve Choice, put 'R' by that Subject

Subject	Choice
Art (Art)	2
German (De)	
Drama (Dr)	4
French (Fr)	1

In this case they should enter '1' against their First Choice, a '2' against their Second Choice, etc. If you have specified in **Options** that you want a 1st Reserve Choice, then they should enter an '**R**' against this Reserve Subject.   This is illustrated on the Example that the parents can view.

When they have entered their Choices they are asked to click on the Submit button.
The Choices are summarised for them:

Please check your Subjects and if they are correct, click 'Confirm Choices'

Name: Melanie Owen
Class: 9C
Username: MOWEN

Choice No.	Subject chosen
1	French
2	Art
3	History
4	Drama
R	Food Technology

[Confirm Choices]   [Go back and change choices]

If you specified a Question in Section 3 (page 4) then it is asked here.
When they click on 'Confirm Choices' the data is stored.

If you decided to set up an Email Confirmation [see page 4] then they are offered a clickable link, and if they accept then they are asked to enter their email address.

At any stage you can monitor the progress as parents/students select their Choices, by using the screen shown in Sections 7 or 9 of the Control Panel.

Step 8

When you are sure that **all** the students have entered their Choices (see Section 7 or 9 on the Control Panel), then you need to transfer the data from the TOOLS System to the *Options* software.

Type the URL in your browser to go to the Log-In Screen [see Step 5 above].
Enter your UserName & Password/PIN [as in Step 5 above] to enter the Control Panel.

Go to Section 10 of the Control Panel and click on the link:

> **Export**
>
> 10   Export the Students' Choices to a file needed by *TT-Options*

to go to the Export Screen:

> ### Exporting the Choices for this population
>
> This will export your Choices to the file 'TOOLS_Choices.txt"
> You can then import this file into *TT-Options*.
>
> [Export Choices]

When you have done this, you get a message about saving the file called Tools_Choices.txt

> ### Choices now saved
>
> **The file 'TOOLS_Choices.txt' has now been created.**
>
> You may have been prompted to download the file to your PC (or memory stick).
>
> Or the file may have been downloaded automatically to your computer's 'downloads' folder.

Check that the file has been saved on your PC or on a USB memorystick.

Then go into the *Options* program, and enter the TOOLS Screen [as shown on page 1].

At Step 8 click the   [⇒ Import Student Choices from TOOLS ...]   button.

Follow the 3 steps shown below to load the collected data into *Options*:

Import Choices from TOOLS on-line

Step 1: Select the file to import from:

[find file 📂]   M:\TOOLS_Choices.txt

Step 2: Preview the Students' Choices:

| Student	Ch-1	Ch-2	Ch-3	Ch-4	Ch-5	Res-1
Ross Farnell	Mu	De	Art	Fo	Gg	Hi
Sarah Healey	CD	Dr	Fo	Gg	IT	Fr
Patrick Horne	IT	Sp	Dr	Fo	Art	Gg
Laura Howarth	Fr	Fo	Gg	Art	Hi	Mu
Paul Hurst	Fo	PE	CD	Art	Dr	Gg

[Preview File >]

Step 3: [↗ Import the Choices]   [✗ Cancel]

The Choices that the Parents/Students entered in their web-browsers are now in *Options*, ready for you to construct the best Pattern, either interactively or using Auto-Create.

Step 9

When you go to the Students & Choices Screen in *Options* you should now see that all the Students have a complete set of Subject Choices.
If you posed a question (see section 3, page 4) and they answered it, their answer will appear in the 'Student Comment' box.
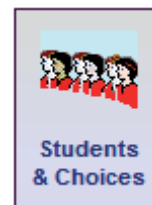
If you have any Students who joined the school after you set up the list of Students in the TOOLS System, then you need to add their Names and their Choices to this screen now. Similarly if any students return their Choices on paper for some reason.

Rules
If you have set up any Rules on this screen, or if you set up any Rules now, then *Options* will show you which Students have broken those Rules.   See page 19 of the *Options* Handbook.

Once you are satisfied with the data that you have got, you can move ahead,
- to the Clash Table [see page 22 in the *Options* Handbook],
- and then build a good Pattern, either interactively or using Auto-Create [pages 23-39].

When you have completed the process, and achieved a good Pattern, then you can use the Mail-Merge feature in *Options* to send a letter home to Parents, so that they know the final outcome. This is particularly important if you don't achieve 100% satisfaction or have to use Reserve Choices. See Appendix 3 in the *Options* Handbook.

If you have any questions or suggestions for TOOLS, please let us know at: support@timetabler.com

FAQS

1. Can I link the TOOLS system to my school's IAG/Careers web-site?

Yes, on the Students/Parents Screen [see page 13] there are 2 hyperlinks, which link to 2 simple HTML web-pages.

The first of these [TOOLS-Example1.html] is an example which you may wish to leave largely intact (though you could add a note such as "*Please ensure you read the A4 sheet(s) that we sent you. It explains some Rules that you need to follow.*").

The second link may be more useful to you. By default it links to a sample page [courseinfo.html], but you can replace this by your own page(s). The easiest way is to change the hyperlink by entering the new hyperlink URL on the *Options* screen shown at Step 3 on page 2 [part 2].
This new page could be a 'portal' page with many links on it, perhaps one for each subject, as well as links to IAG/Careers advice.

Note: your documentation may be in a VLE and so it may have a very long URL. In this case, use https://tinyurl.com/ to produce a short URL that will fit into the box shown on page 2.

Be very careful if you are tempted to change any other TOOLS files. Most of them contain some php code, and if you change this we cannot be held responsible for the results.
After any changes please make sure that you test the system carefully [see page 11].

2. How do I handle multiple populations? We usually have 3 populations: Y9⮕Y10, Y11⮕12 and also a parallel Y11⮕12 population so I can collect provisional choices early in the year.

You need to install TOOLS in 3 different folders on your webserver and run them separately.
For example, you might have:
www.myschool.sch.uk/year10,
www.myschool.sch.uk/year12, and
www/myschool.sch.uk/year12provisional

But you still only need one copy of *Options*, of course, to export from and import to ... with three populations ... then just move between the populations in *Options* as you would normally.

3. What's the best way to handle the deadline?

At Step 6 we suggest that you include a deadline date in your letter to parents.
As the deadline date approaches you can go to Section 7 of the Admin Panel (see page 10) to see who still needs to be chivvied to make their choices.
Then when the deadline date arrives you can go to the Admin Panel (see page 3), and at the bottom select **[Enable/Disable TOOLS]**. Enter X in the box to disable TOOLS and enter a message to be shown to any student/parent that tries to log in.

4. How do I handle students who join the school late, or who can only reply on paper?

When you import the choices back into *Options*, they overwrite all existing choices for all students. This also means that if a student has not made any choices in TOOLS, then after importing he will have no choices in *Options* either; any existing choices he had before importing will be lost.
[The Students & Choices Screen in *Options* shows you clearly who is outstanding.]

So if some students are returning their choices on paper, or join the school late, you will need to enter these manually into *Options* <u>after</u> you have imported everyone else's choices from TOOLS.

Another way you could do it, is that even if a student returns his choices on paper, you could enter them into TOOLS yourself ...so all the choices are held in TOOLS and imported in one go.
[You could also then enter the parent's email address (if you knew it) as you entered their choices, and so have a confirmation of their choices emailed to them.]

5. Can I customize the opening screen for our school?

If you wish, you can change the picture on the opening screen to show your school's logo.
But be careful if you make any changes as we cannot be held responsible for the results.

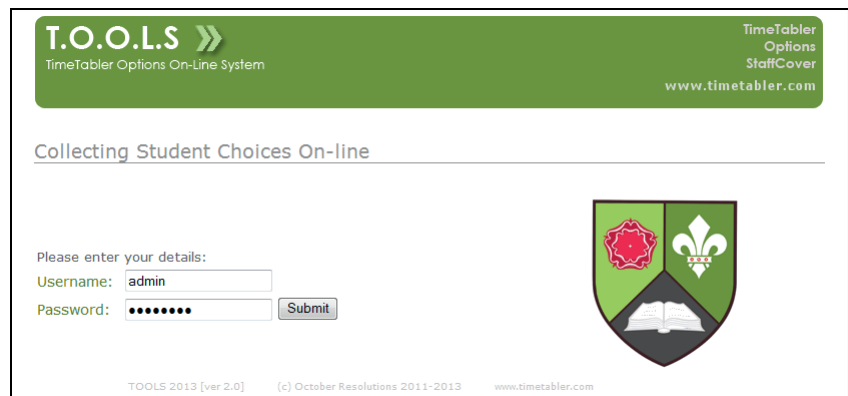After any change please make sure that you test the system
carefully [see page 11].

By default the opening screen shows this image:

The file-name of this image is logo.png
where logo.png is an image file in the same folder as all the other TOOLS files.

To show your school logo you need to :
*   make a png file of your logo (for example in PaintShopPro or Photoshop),
    (the existing image is 345px x 220px so your image should be a similar size)
*   save it as a png file called: logo.png
    (to make any background colour transparent use alpha channel transparency),
*   place this new image in the TOOLS folder to replace the existing logo.png

The opening screen might then
look like this:

6. We're a big school and when uploading students into TOOLS we're finding that not all of the 660 students are being imported.

In a big school the server may 'time out' before they are all loaded, so you may need to increase 'max_execution_time' on the server.

7. My IT Manager doesn't wish to set up TOOLS on the school's server. Is there an alternative?

Yes, the complete TOOLS system can be hosted for you, free or for a nominal fee, see more details at: www.mistservices.co.uk/timetabling/tools/

This hosting is provided Free of charge for the first year when you purchase *Options*.

The hosting saves you the hassle of installing PHP and setting up MySQL databases on your school's server. It also includes full SSL encryption for security.

8. A pupil/parent makes a mistake and wants to re-do their Choices. What should I do?

If a student makes a mistake (or wants to change their choices), there are 2 ways to handle this:

a) Either: Power remains with you. This is the default.
You can say that if a student needs to make a change, s/he needs to let you know first.
You can then click on 'The List of Students' in Item 7 (see the top screenshot on page 10) and click 'Undo' by that student's name. That student will then be able to login and enter his/her choices again.
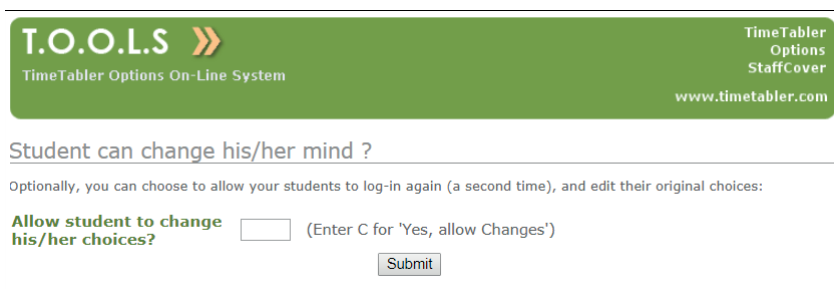**Note:** If students try to make a change, without you doing 'Undo' as above, they will be told what choices they've made, but won't be able to change them – and they are told on-screen that they have to ask you to 'Undo' them first.

(Or alternatively, you could decide that changes are not made in TOOLS, only in *Options* after you have imported from TOOLS. For example, on the 'Review & Counsel' Screen.)

b) Or: Power to the students:
You can say that the students have the power to login again and change their choices.
To give (all) students this power, go to Item 7 of the Control Panel (page 3), and click where it says: '(Or Click here to allow Students to self-edit)'.
You'll be taken to a screen like this:

By default, the box is empty …meaning that students are NOT allowed to alter their choices themselves; they need to ask you / the school, as in part (a) above.

But if you are sure that you want to allow (all) students to log-in again and change their Choices, then enter a 'C' in the box and click 'Submit'.
Then **all** students will be able to login again and edit their choices (at any time until you choose to say TOOLS is closed).
Be aware of the consequences of allowing this to be freely available!

9. Can I export the students' Choices to an Excel file?
You can, at item 11 of the Control Panel. There is a choice of 2 formats.

10. I've just been told that I have to offer an extra subject. Can I add it into TOOLS?
You can, see page 7.
That page also explains how you can 'delete' a subject.