

PARENT PORTAL AUTO-AUTHENTICATION

How It Works, Why You Should Use It

In 2021, we released an optional new authentication model for the Parent Portal in BusPlanner Web. It leverages each student's contact email addresses in BusPlanner Pro – which you and your student information systems (SIS) have full control over – to determine who can access information on each student.

The short version is this: If someone's email address is listed in a student's Contacts tab in Pro, they'll be able to access that student with that email – automatically. If it isn't listed, they'll be prevented from adding that student. Here are the details.

How It Works

From a parent or guardian's perspective, here's how this new option works:

- 1) A parent signs up for the Parent Portal with their email address.
- 2) BusPlanner Web sends them a validation email to confirm that it's actually them, and not someone else using their email address. Once they click the link within the email, they'll be able to log in.
- 3) As soon as the new account is validated, BusPlanner looks through the Contacts tab of the Student Properties, for all students in the Pro database, to see if that email address is listed as a contact email for any children in Pro.
- 4) For any that it finds, those students are instantly – and automatically – added to that parent account. Any others are excluded. The parent doesn't even have the *option* to add a student to their account - they're added automatically based on those student contacts.
- 5) Every time the parent logs in, BusPlanner Web checks *again*, and updates both the students and busing information (routes, schools, etc.) associated to that parent account. Any student associations are permanent until that student – or that email address – is deleted from Pro.



Parent Portal

Why Use This Method?

Security. You don't need to worry about which combination of student details (student ID, birthdate, etc.) is most secure. Students are added to accounts automatically – and *only* if that person is already pre-identified as a contact in Pro.

Simplicity. Does your student contact information flow in via imports from your SIS? If so, that's typical – and with this option, it also means that your SIS will govern who gets to access each student. If a parent's email isn't attached to a student, you can add it in Pro – or, alternatively, refer them to the school to have them add the email address.

Convenience. Once a parent creates an account and logs in, their students are already there – period. No need to dig up student ID numbers or other identifying information. This results in a smoother, more user-friendly experience for parents – and fewer calls to your office.

Setting It Up

To use this feature, a few things need to be in place:

- You should be confident in the student contact info – especially email addresses – that Pro has on file. If not, you run the risk of people getting access to student information that they shouldn't have – and of calls from confused parents wondering why they can't access their children's information.
- A checkbox called "Allow Portal Access" needs to be checked on for all parent email addresses in Pro – unless there are emails listed that should specifically *not* have access. This can be done on a one-time basis via Edit > Set Student Values, or on an ongoing basis through a change to your student update template.
- When all that is in place, there's a BusPlanner Web setting called "ParentLogin_UseBPPProContacts" that needs to be turned on. Don't turn it on until you're ready to go live, as it will wipe out any pre-existing student-to-parent-account associations, although the accounts themselves will still be accessible.



See It Live

To see firsthand how this works, [check out Episode 60 of the BusPlanner Webinar on our BusPlanner Forum](#). We'll show you how to configure this option on your own – and how it can instantly make a difference for parents.