Scheduling two or more timetables with different period-times

Note : For details of how to timetable in a Junior or Primary or Prep School, please see:
www.timetabler.com/SupportCentre/Primary-Junior-Prep-School-Timetabling.pdf

Example scenario

Suppose you wish to timetable:
- a Senior School, years 7 to 13, with a 6-period day, starting at 9.00 AM, and
- the Junior School, years 1 to 6, with a 7-period day, starting at 8:30 AM,

and some of your staff teach in **both** timetables**.
There may be a further complication, that you need 10 minutes commuting time to travel from one site to the other.

Most timetablers would start by scheduling the Senior School timetable first, as it is likely to be more complicated.
Then when you start the Junior School timetable, the very first thing you need to do is to block-off,
for each teacher, the periods in the Junior School when they cannot teach because they are already teaching in the Senior School (while also allowing for travelling time between sites).

You can do this manually, by adding B markers, but there is a feature in *TimeTabler* to block-off those periods for you automatically. It can be applied to more than two timetables if necessary.

**Of course if the period-times are the same, or if you don't have staff teaching on both sites, then you don't need this method at all.
Note : To import into your MIS, please check first if it can import two timetables with different numbers/times of periods, see page 8.
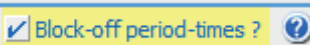
Contents

page

Outline of the Method

The sequence of steps in *TimeTabler* for the example on the previous page is:

1 a)   Use the School Structure Screen (Section C5 in your Manual) to set up the Periods & Days for the **Senior** School schedule.

   b)   Start a New Schedule with this structure (see E1), loading a batch as usual (E2) and assigning the activities in the usual way, until this timetable is complete.

2 a)   At Customise Menu ➡ Day & Period Labels, enter the Period-Times for 'cycle-format-1' for the **Senior** School timetable. This step is discussed in more detail on page 3.

   b)   On the same screen, select 'cycle-format-2' and then enter the Period-Times for the **Junior** School timetable.

3 a)   Use the School Structure Screen (see C5) to setup the Periods & Days for the **Junior** School schedule.

   b)   On the List of Schedules Screen (section E1) tick the blocking-off box: and then start a New Schedule (for the **Junior** School).
   Follow the steps shown on page 4 to specify how the periods should be blocked-off.

   c)   When that is completed, all the periods when the staff are teaching in the Senior School will have been blocked-off in the new Junior schedule. So you can start to assign the Junior School activities in the usual way, knowing that you can't now double-book a teacher.

Before you start

Please think ahead to possible effects on the Senior school timetable caused by requirements of the Junior school.

For example, suppose the Junior school has Games on a Monday afternoon and requires the following Senior school staff to help out : BKE, DDW, HDC. Before you schedule the Senior school timetable you must make these staff Unavailable (on the Staff Availability Screen or on the Staff Timetable Screen) : Later, when you start to add the Junior school schedule, you can make these staff available again, for the Games lesson.

Setting up the cycle-formats

For each part of the school, Senior or Junior, the cycle (eg. week or fortnight) will have a specific format. *TimeTabler* needs to know these formats, with details of the Period-Times for each one.
It uses these times to know which periods to block-off.

Go to Customise Menu ⇒ Day & Period Labels ⇒ Period Times. If necessary select a new Cycle-format.

For example, the default, **Cycle-format-1**, normally used for the **Senior** School might be:

Enter the Start & End times of each period on Monday in the format hh:mm   eg. 09:00 or 14:00

If you enter a period for Monday then you can use [Repeat first day] to copy it to the other days.

[Copy Period Labels] allows you to copy Period-Times from the Period Labels tab, if you have already set them up there in the correct format. Click the button for more details.

So after doing this the **Senior School** might be:

Then, for the **Junior School**, select a different cycle format, with its own number of day and periods for the Junior School. For example, select **Cycle-format-2** and specify the days & periods for it:

Then enter the Start & End times for the Junior School. For example:

Starting the Junior School timetable

1. Go to the **School Structure Screen** (see section C5 in your Manual) and setup the correct Periods & Days for the Junior School timetable.

2. Go to the **List of Schedules Screen** (see E1) and tick the blocking-off box: ✔ Block-off period-times ? ②
Then click on the **New** button to start the Junior schedule, and load in the first batch.
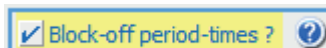
3. You are shown this screen:

   Step 1:
   Click the box and select the **Senior** ('from') schedule that you did earlier.

   Step 2:
   In the drop-down list select the correct cycle-format for the new **Junior** ('to') timetable.
   In this example it was called cycle-format-2 (see page 3).

   Step 3:
   The usual choice is:
   Clear all existing unavailable periods ▾
   and:
   Travel time: 0 mins
   but see page 5 for more details.

   Then click on [Apply Blocking-off ▸▦] to apply the blocking-off.

   Block-off one Schedule against another ✕

   1 STEP 1: Select the 'from' Schedule:
   Schedule: **Senior School 1**
   Cycle format: **1**   [Select the Schedule]

   2 STEP 2: Check / Select the cycle-format for the 'to' Schedule:
   Schedule: **Junior School**   Cycle Format:
   [Cycle-format 2 ▾]

   3 STEP 3: Choose the Settings then Apply Blocking-off:
   [Clear existing 'B'usy periods (only) ▾] ②   Travel time: [0] mins ②

   [**Apply Blocking-off** ▸▦]

   [? Help]

4. The New Junior schedule will open and you will see, on the Staff Timetable Screen something like:

   B = **B**usy. Each of these markers shows a period that cannot be used for that teacher, because they are already teaching in the Senior School (or commuting between sites).
   TimeTabler will not allow you to place a lesson in those cells.
   The **B** markers will not be shown on the final printouts (except by a faint grey 'unavailable' cell).

5. **Important : Spend a few minutes checking that all the markers are in the correct places!**

   To remove or add **B** **X** **A** **P** **F** **f** **d** markers, use the Staff Availability Palette: [✔ Show Staff Availability Palette]

6. Now you can start to assign the Junior School lessons shown on the Priority List, in the usual way.

Further details about Step 3

Clearing B markers

There are 3 choices:

Clear all existing unavailable periods
Clear existing 'B'usy periods (only)
Don't clear anything

1. The first is the default. This will remove any existing B A P F f d markers that are already in the 'to' schedule, but it leaves X markers in place.
   It then adds B markers based on the 'from' schedule, so that the 'to' schedule is now up to date.
   In the example on pages 1 and 3 there probably won't be any markers to remove.
   This is the usual choice.

2. The second option removes any B periods (only) that are already in the 'to' (Junior) schedule, and then adds B markers using the 'from' schedule. It leaves the other markers.

   It will be useful if you need to 're-sync' an existing 'to' timetable against a 'from' timetable again.
   For example, you may need to do this re-syncing if you have to change the 'from' schedule in some way, see page 7.

3. The third option does not clear any markers in the 'to' schedule, it just adds B markers using the 'from' schedule.

Travel time

If it takes 10 minutes to travel from the site of one timetable to the site of the other timetable then you would enter:

Travel time: 10 mins

If a period in the 'from' (eg. Senior) timetable runs from 09:00 to 10:00, then a 10 min travel time will block off with B markers any periods in the 'to' (eg. Junior) timetable between the times of 08:50 and 10:10.

This is because the teacher can leave the 'to' site no later than 08:50 (in order to travel to the 'from' site), and in travelling from the 'from' site cannot arrive at the 'to' site to teach before 10:10.

Limitations of the method:

1. Proliferation
Because the 'to' (eg. Junior) schedule has different times from the 'from' (eg. Senior) schedule, a single period that is blocked off with an X in the 'from' schedule may become a double XX or even a triple XXX in the 'to' schedule. While this is logically inevitable, it can look disconcerting.
If you look more carefully at the exact times of the teacher's Unavailability, you may be able to reduce the number of X markers in the 'to' schedule. The same applies to the A P F f d markers.
If you ever need to re-sync the first schedule (see page 6) then the markers are likely to proliferate further.

2. Teacher Pools
The full details of Pool (soft/hard) lessons are not transferred from the 'from' schedule to the 'to' schedule. Eg. if a Pool called =It contains 6 teachers and 4 of them are **B**usy in Senior school, then when you block-off the Junior Schedule, 4 B markers will appear but otherwise there is no note that you only have 2 members of the =It Pool left. So there is nothing to stop another 6 =It teachers being scheduled for the same period. There is also no note that the 4 B markers that have been transferred are 'soft' (ie. could be transferred to a different teacher in the Pool). In effect, they (like all B markers) will look 'hard'.

3.
This feature is intended to save your time by doing the blocking-off automatically. If the result isn't what you want you can always start a Junior timetable without any blocking-off, and do the blocking-off manually, if you wish, by adding your own B markers using the Staff Availability Palette.

4.
For possible limitations in Covering absent staff, see Appendix 2.

Two examples

1. If the Period-Times on the 'from' site (eg. Senior) are:

2	3	4
09:00	10:00	11:00
10:00	11:00	12:00

and period-3 on the 'to' site (eg. Junior) is the same:

2	3	4
09:10	10:00	11:00
10:00	11:00	11:50

then a teacher on the 'from' timetable (Senior) with a lesson in period-3:

will produce a **B** marker on the 'to' timetable (Junior), if there is no commuting time, just in period-3:

but if there is 5 minutes commuting time then more periods are affected:

2. If the Period-Times on the 'from' site (eg. Senior) are:

2	3	4
09:00	10:00	11:00
10:00	11:00	12:00

and the Period-Times on the 'to' (Junior) site are different:

2	3	4
09:00	09:50	10:40
09:50	10:40	11:30

then a teacher on the 'from' timetable (Senior) with a lesson in period-3:

will produce **B** markers on the 'to' timetable (Junior), if there is no commuting time, in two periods:

but if there is **15** minutes commuting time then more periods are affected:

Three timetables

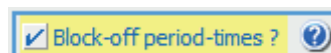To apply the method to a 3rd timetable (for example, a timetable for the **Infant** part of your school) then:

1. Do the Senior and Junior timetables as outlined in Steps 1–3 on page 2.

2. Set up a cycle-format-3 for the **Infant** timetable, see page 3.

3. Do as in Step 3 on page 2, by setting up the school structure of the **Infant** school and starting a New timetable with the blocking-off box ticked.   ✔ Block-off period-times ? ❓
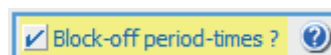   In the screen on page 4 choose: (1) 'from' **Senior** schedule
                            (2) the cycle-format for the **Infant** schedule.
   The resulting timetable will have **B** markers decided by the staff teaching on the Senior schedule.
   Close this Infant schedule without doing any scheduling.

4. Then on the List of Schedules Screen (E1), tick the blocking off box and then double-click on the **Infant** schedule to open this schedule again.   ✔ Block-off period-times ? ❓
   You will see the screen on page 4 again and this time choose:
                            (1) 'from' **Junior** schedule
                            (2) the cycle-format for the **Infant** schedule again
                            (3) change the drop-down to 'Don't clear anything'.
   The resulting timetable will now have extra **B** markers caused by the teaching on the Junior schedule.
   So now the Infant schedule has **B** markers due to both the Senior and the Junior schedules, and you can now start to schedule the Infant timetable.

Re-syncing the Senior Schedule

Having started work on the Junior School schedule there may be rare occasions when you may need to stop and go back to the Senior schedule. This may perhaps entail 're-syncing' the Senior school so that it then includes the work that you have been doing on the Junior schedule!

Two scenarios:

Scenario 1
Part-way through the Junior schedule you find that you need to move a lesson on the Senior schedule in order to assign a problem lesson on the Junior schedule.

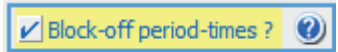In this case we suggest that you do not 're-sync' the timetables.
We suggest that you simply:
- note which teacher & period you need to make free on the Junior schedule
- go into the Senior schedule, use FIT or 'Move' to clear that teacher in that period.
  Make a careful note of what this move entails.
- go back into the Junior schedule and change the B marker(s) to reflect the new positions on the Senior timetable. To add or remove a B marker use the Staff Availability Palette.

Scenario 2
Part-way through the Junior schedule you find that you need to make major changes to the Senior schedule. For example, perhaps a part-timer now says she cannot teach on Fridays.

In this case you may need to:

1. Re-sync the Senior school timetable with the state that the Junior schedule is now in.
    To do this:
    - On the List of Schedules Screen (see E1) tick the blocking-off box:
    - Double-click the Senior School schedule to open it. You will see the 3-step screen shown on p. 3.
      Step 1. For the 'from' schedule select the Junior School schedule.
      Step 2. For the cycle-format choose the cycle-format for the Senior School schedule (this is usually cycle-format-1).
      Step 3. Leave the default of 'Clear all existing unavailable periods'. Enter a Travel Time if appropriate.

2. The Senior School schedule will then be Blocked-off according to the lessons that you have assigned on the Junior schedule. You should:
    - check the B markers carefully,
    - add any A P F f d markers if necessary.
    You can then do whatever scheduling is needed on the Senior schedule (eg. to solve the problem with the part-timer).

3. When you have finished working on the Senior School schedule then you will need to re-sync the Junior School schedule again, by repeating the steps above but swapping 'Junior' and 'Senior'.

    Then you can finish the Junior schedule.

We recommend that you do not do any re-syncing unless it is really necessary.

Two machines

If the Senior School timetabler and the Junior School timetabler are working on separate machines, then
- while scheduling the Senior School, on the 'senior' machine, think of this as the 'master' machine,
- when finished, transfer the data to the 'junior' machine as explained in HelpMovie 10,
- while doing the Junior School, on the 'junior' machine, think of this as now being the 'master' machine.

Only one machine can be 'master' at any time, otherwise the schedules may get out of sync.

Appendix 1

Which MIS can import 2 timetables with different periods/times?

Not all MIS can do this, so you need to check whether yours can cope. Please ask the HelpDesk of your MIS supplier for the current answer, but **at the time of writing this document** these were the comments we received when we enquired. **But please check for yourself, details may have changed.**
In particular ask how the 2 timetables are handled in all parts of their MIS (eg. Cover and Attendance).

SIMS

Further to your recent enquiry on multiple time tables. I can offer the following advice…

1. In order for a school using SIMS to be able to utilise the concept of multiple time table, they need to buy a licence from us. Failure to do so and apply it will mean that the school will not see the functionality in SIMS.

2. You should be aware of the following:
   a. Once the Multiple Timetables licence has been applied, users no longer submit the timetable cycle into SIMS from the timetable program - instead they set it up in SIMS.net. The cycle defined in SIMS.net consists of segments, each sharing the same number of days, but with variable (and separate) definitions of the periods. It will of course still be necessary to set up the cycle in *TimeTabler* (to match one of these segments) in the usual way. NB. It is not critical that the names of the periods in the timetable program match the names used in SIMS.
   b. When the Timetable is submitted from *TimeTabler*, the Curriculum Matching Wizard tries to work out which segment the submission is for by looking at the "shape" of the timetable - in terms of the number and type of periods. The format of the submission file has not changed at all. If the Wizard cannot work out which segment is the correct one, the user is prompted to choose (and warned how critical this is!).

   – Partner Development Support, Capita SIMS, www.capita-sims.co.uk

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iSAMS

iSAMS say: Multi-Divisional Timetables is a feature that enables schools to create multiple 'divisions' within the school, and thus create separate registration rules for each 'division'.
This is particularly useful for schools with multiple campuses or tiers such as 3-18 schools. Each division of the school can now have AM and PM registrations as well as create their own lesson by lesson registrations.
With Multi-Divisional Timetables enabled, teachers can now also be assigned to one or more divisions in our HR Manager module. This in turn filters through to cover arrangements.

Exporting your timetable
If you have this feature in iSAMS then you can have separate timetables for different parts of the school (perhaps with different period timings). When you import them into iSAMS it will allow you to run multiple import processes and then merge them into one 'master' timetable.
Note: If you have more than one school, you will need (at least) one *TimeTabler* licence per school.

The basic steps are:
1 - Create 2 (or more) different Schedules in *TimeTabler*, in the usual way; one for your Senior school and one for your Junior (say).
2 - Export your Senior and Junior Schedules from *TimeTabler* to iSAMS (or Ed:gen) separately, ensuring correct period numbers are used (as required by iSAMS**).
3 - Upload/import each separately into iSAMS**.   iSAMS** will merge them as required.
(** or Ed:gen)

WCBS PASS/3Sys

Yes, we do cater for multiple timetables with different times. The scenarios you describe with different Senior and Junior timetables are very common, as are different period times for summer and winter timetables.
In the Teacher's Home Page in 3Sys, the User will see a screen similar to the illustration below:

Clearly this isn't a realistic example as the teacher is expected to be in different places at the same time, but it was the easiest way to illustrate how the different period times from the 2 timetables are shown when a user clicks on the lesson. (Only one lesson's sticker is shown at a time; I have cheated here to show 2 at once).

There is an option in the setup to specify which timetable break periods are shown from.

We don't currently have any specific documentation about the use of multiple timetables.
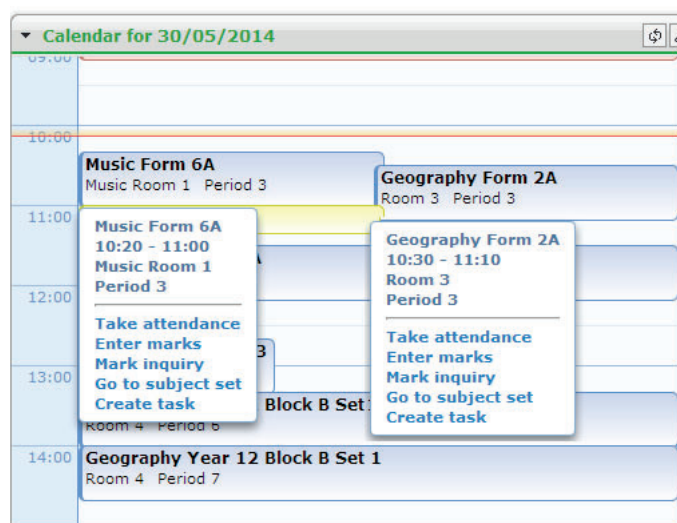
The timetable data is all held separately, so for example there will be a Junior Timetable with lessons attached and a Senior Timetable with lessons attached. They could have different times, different lesson lengths, and even different working days or numbers of days in their cycles. They are only combined in the display of the timetable in 3Sys, based on the Staff_id having entries for both timetables.

This applies also to Pupils, but this is less common, although I have seen this used in some schools where they have a high proportion of SEN pupils, and there is a separate timetable for the SEN provision. This has the advantage of showing the "standard" lesson as well as the SEN lesson if the SEN lesson is taking the place of a standard lesson.

– WCBS HelpDesk, www.wcbs.co.uk

SCHOOLBASE

Yes. At the moment, if you import a timetable into SchoolBase for a given academic year say 2013/2014 for the Junior School and come back 2 hours later to do the same thing for the same academic year but for the Senior School, it will over-write the existing timetable. What we do to prevent that, is we use a feature called the "curriculum shifter" to move everything for the Junior School to a new academic year, then after importing that of the Senior School, we move it back using the same feature.

Also at the moment if different parts of the school have different period times, we have a period time set structure that allows us to set different times for different periods for different parts of the school. So the school will create the maximum number of periods needed to implement their timetable, give these periods appropriate import codes (which will be used in the importer); create period time sets which reference these same periods and tells the system when each period is happening; and then assign these period time sets to different parts of the school.

If you are asking for manuals, then they are available here http://www.furlongsolutions.com/support/schoolbase/manuals/SchoolBase-5-Manuals
Curriculum - Curriculum and Timetable (Updated 01/01/14)
Curriculum - Timetable Import (Updated 01/01/14)
However, you need to have a username and password in order to gain access.

– SchoolBase HelpDesk, www.furlongsolutions.com

RM INTEGRIS

I'm afraid that (at present), Integris does not support import of overlapping timetables as you describe (concurrent timetables with different period structures).

Double First ENGAGE

Exporting 2 or more timetables (with different period numbers and/or times) from *TimeTabler* into Engage:
Yes, this is fine because Engage imports the timetable one year at a time, and it allows for different period times in those different years (as described below).

Number of periods in a day: In Engage, we only allow 20 periods but we also allow a 'break' between every single period, and the school simply sets how long it is. So an Engage school would never place a break into a period.

Within that, the number and times of periods can be different for different days and for different years. For example, a school can have 9 periods on all days (except Saturday) and they are 40 minutes long (but could easily be different). There might be breaks between periods 2/3 (10 mins), 5/6 (50 mins), etc.

But you can over-ride this for any particular year group, even if the overall shape isn't 'rectangular' – basically each period and break for each day and each year group can be changed and this is reflected through our attendance marking, timetable setup, timetable printing, lesson planning, cover, location, booking etc.

Because of this when we do printouts they have to show times and not periods, because a teacher teaching 2 different year groups could have the periods at different times, for example if Year 1 has 30 minute long lessons and Year 12 has 45 minute lessons and you can see that the teacher teaches period 3 in both year groups.

– Engage HelpDesk, http://www.doublefirst.com/

ARBOR

Yes, we fully support the importing of two or more timetables with different period times, using shared resources. We display these times using the precise calendar time slot e.g. 09:15-09:50. Our product is suitable for the needs of secondary schools, colleges and university timetables - even if they do not follow consistent "periods" but may operate with different schedules at different faculties.

– Arbor HelpDesk, www.arbor-education.com

BEHAVIOURWATCH

Yes, BehaviourWatch / SchoolPod allows for an import of two or more timetables with different period times, as long as the data is in the format discussed previously.
We will need the Period name, the Start Time and the End Time, and the data will map accordingly into BehaviourWatch / SchoolPod.
Due to the one-on-one support we offer schools, we do not have documentation, instead we communicate with the school directly.

– www.teachers2parents.co.uk, www.schoolpod.co.uk

BROMCOM

No, I'm afraid not. The Bromcom MIS [per school] can hold any number of period structures but only one can be applied to any date range. We have schools where different year groups run with slightly period different structures and in those cases they will have set up a period structure that accommodates the max number of periods in any day and just leave some unused on certain year groups. Time variations would have to go in the description because each period can only have a single start and end time.

– Bromcom HelpDesk, www.bromcom.com

Appendix 2

Does this method affect the way that we do daily Cover for absent staff?

Using this Senior-Junior method can affect your Covering of absent staff as follows:

1. If you are using our *StaffCover* software, then note that you will need to install a separate copy of *StaffCover* for each schedule; so if you have 2 schedules in *TimeTabler* ('Senior' and 'Junior') then you will need to install 2 copies of *StaffCover*.

   But note that using 2 copies of *StaffCover* will only work well if staff with 'Senior' lessons only provide cover for other staff with 'Senior' lessons, and staff with 'Junior' lessons only provide cover for other staff with 'Junior' lessons.

   Any questions or doubts; please contact us on our Support Centre.

2. If you are using your **MIS** to provide cover, please check with your MIS supplier whether their Cover module will work well when 2 schedules are imported.
   (See also Appendix 1 for information on which MIS are happy to import 2 schedules at all).

   Any questions or doubts; **please contact your MIS supplier to check**.
   If their answer is not clear, let us know via our Support Centre.

Appendix 3

Looking at a Combined timetable for all staff.

You can view a Combined View of your 2 (or 3) schedules – this will show you what each teacher is doing through the week, in a single Excel file:
This then allows you to check that every teacher has a lunch break, etc.

1. First ensure that all your periods have timings specified for them, at
Check & Tidy ➠ Edit Day & Period labels ➠ Period Times.

2. Then go to Schedule Menu ➠ Combined Timeline View (of 2 Schedules), to produce the spreadsheet:

Symbol	Meaning:
A	In this period, this teacher is *busy* teaching a lesson on the **first** schedule that you selected.
a	In this period, this teacher is *unavailable* on the **first** schedule you selected.
B	In this period, this teacher is *busy* teaching a lesson on the **second** schedule that you selected.
b	In this period, this teacher is *unavailable* on the **second** schedule you selected.