

SchoolMessenger Introduction

The call service will work in the following manner:

In the event of a district-wide emergency, such as an early dismissal for severe weather, calls will go out to every parent/guardian phone number that is a direct line (i.e., does not require the caller to dial an extension).

In the event of a school specific emergency, such as an early dismissal for a water main break, calls will go out to every parent/guardian responsible for a child in that school.

In emergency situations, calls will be made to every parent/guardian phone number possible. A detail explanation of which phone numbers will be called is listed below in the “Common Questions” section of this message. The service may also be used occasionally to deliver non-emergency calls to the student’s home phone number. Details about this are also provided in the “Common Questions” section below.

We will **not** use the service in the early morning hours for routine closures such as snow days.

The service can distinguish between a person and an answering machine (or voicemail service).

If a person answers the call, they will hear a recorded message from a school district administrator. If an answering machine (or voicemail service) answers the call, the message will be delivered to it.

Common Questions:

Which phone numbers will be used?

In the event of an emergency, this service will be used to dial every number we believe has a chance of getting the message out. This includes home phones, cell phones, and work phones for all adults in our student information database. The service is not capable of dialing extension numbers, so any work numbers that require dialing an extension will not be called. We will also filter out any numbers that have no chance of delivering the message (pager numbers, fax numbers, etc...).

Where do the phone numbers come from?

The phone numbers are extracted from our student information database. That database is populated with the information gathered at the beginning of each school year, along with any changes that occur throughout the year. The service updates its call list from the student database every night.

Will the school’s relationship with this service provider cause me to receive any unwanted sales calls?

Absolutely Not. This service provider is contractually obligated to strictly maintain the confidentiality of our information.

Will I receive multiple calls if I have multiple children?

No. The service removes duplicate numbers prior to placing the calls.

What happens if the call is not answered?

If no one answers the phone after 6 rings, the service will wait 15 minutes before trying that number again. It will continue calling every 15 minutes for 3 attempts.

If the service gets a busy signal it will wait 3 minutes for 4 attempts.

Note: If your answering machine is set to pick up after 6 rings it will not receive the message.

What might cause me to receive a partial message or no message on my answering machine/voicemail?

If the SchoolMessenger system is not interrupted by noise or someone speaking within the first 3.5 seconds, the message is delivered in its entirety. If the system detects a greeting longer than a few seconds, the system treats this as an outgoing message from an answering machine and will wait for a pause (usually after the beep) before delivering the message to be recorded.

If your answering machine greeting is sporadic with varied periods of silence, the system will read this as a live person and begin playing the message, even though the machine has yet to start recording. This will result in a recording of silence (if the message finishes playing before the machine begins recording) or if just the last portion of the message runs over, this will result in message cutoff. The recommended solution is to set answering machines to record for a longer period and record outgoing greetings that do not contain long pauses.

For voice mailboxes where it is necessary to enter a mailbox number, School Messenger is unable to leave a message.

If an answering machine is set to pick up after 7 rings or more, the system will not leave a message since it hangs up and tries again after 6 rings.

What will appear on my caller ID?

Depending on the nature of the call, your caller ID will either display the main phone number for the school or the main phone number for the district's central office (651-3361). For example, if a maintenance issue causes the closure of a single school, the call will appear to have originated from that school. If there is an early dismissal for all schools, the call will appear to originate from the district's central office.

If one of the calls is answered, will the service still dial the other numbers?

Yes. The goal of this service is to notify as many parents and guardians as possible.

How long will it take to dial all of these phone numbers?

The SchoolMessenger service is theoretically capable of calling 60,000 phones in 30 minutes.

Have any other emergency procedures changed because of this?

No. We will continue to use our email listserve, TV & radio announcements, and our website to deliver critical information. *This service is an addition to the communication tools we have traditionally employed.*

Will this service be used to alert me of a snow day?

No. We will not use the service in the early morning hours for routine closures such as snow days. When a decision is made to cancel school for snow, the traditional announcement methods will be used. The announcement will first be posted to our website, and then sent out to the TV and radio stations.

Will parents of preschoolers be alerted with this service?

Yes.

Will this service be used for any non-emergency calls?

Yes. We may occasionally relay important information with this service that is not of an emergency nature. However, these brief calls will only be placed at 7pm and will *only* be made to the student's primary *home phone number*.

What is the criteria for an emergency? How frequently will this service be used?

We fully appreciate the potential disruption calls to work and home may cause during the business day. We will use our best discretion to only send emergency calls out for information we feel has urgent relevance.