

Aurora Public Schools
Automated Messaging (via SchoolMessenger)
GUIDELINES
Revised July 2013

PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to offer school-based staff and department heads guidance on the appropriate use of the APS automated messaging system. The goal is to offer practical suggestions for using the system effectively and efficiently.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- **When and how often should messages be sent?**
 - Schools should limit non-emergency messages to three per month.
 - School nights, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
 - School messages should be coordinated with district messages.
 - District level staff will let schools know when district messages are sent.

- **Access to system**
 - **Who will be authorized to use the automated messaging system?**
 - School site level
 - School staff who have gone through training and have received their access / login information
 - Three users per site recommended
 - Principal or designee
 - Assistant Principal
 - Principal designees
 - District level (Must attend training and receive their access / login information)
 - Communication staff
 - Help desk
 - Incident Response Team
 - Leadership Team
 - LT assistants
 - Support Services/Transportation
 - School Services
 - Superintendent

 - **Who manages the system?**
 - The Information Technology Department will oversee adding new user accounts and removing accounts for transitioning staff.
 - Principals, Assistant Principals and designees have access to the database.

 - **What is the best way to use the system?**
 - System use should be limited to general, attendance, meal balance and emergency messages.

- Use the system sparingly, especially for dissemination of messages to large groups (mass audiences) of internal and/or external recipients, keeping in mind the large volume of email and telephone messages that many recipients regularly receive.
- **Types of Messages**
 - SchoolMessenger includes categories for emergency, general, attendance and meal balance messages.
 - **Emergency messages** - School staff should not send messages without authorization from the superintendent or his designee and in coordination with School Security, Incident Response Team, Communication Team and School Services.
 - **Guidelines for Emergency messages**
 - Remain calm.
 - For emergency calls, the system will automatically call all numbers listed for parents and/or staff.
 - “Emergency” messages include, but are not limited to, weather-related emergencies and/or incidents and events that jeopardize the health and safety of students and/or staff.
 - Emergency messages should always be voice recorded in order to personalize the call.
 - Weather-related and other emergency messages that have district-wide implications, such as abduction, injury, death and other situations will be recorded by a member of the communication team.
 - If an event is school specific, the principal will usually deliver the messages since he/she is onsite and aware of the specific circumstances.
 - **Types of Emergency messages**
 - Below are some sample emergency message topics and guidelines for sending the messages.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>When to Send</u>
Bus Accident	Send immediately
Evacuation	Send as soon as possible
Fire	Send immediately
Inclement weather	As soon as possible
Injury or Death	End of day
Lockdown	Send immediately
Weapon on Campus	End of day
 - **Non-emergency messages**—The automated messaging system calls these messages “General” messages.
 - **Guidelines for General messages**
 - Maximum **three** messages per month
 - Please avoid the dissemination of non-essential information that could more appropriately be conveyed through other communication vehicles.

- Please avoid overuse of the system for the dissemination of non-essential messages that could potentially overburden or irritate recipients (message fatigue).
- **Types of General messages that are allowed**
 - Parent-teacher conferences
 - School testing reminders
 - Very special events
 - Picture days
 - School fundraising activities
 - District meeting announcements such as Town Halls
- **Types of General messages that are not allowed**
 - Political messages
 - Weekly updates
- **Attendance messages**—Attendance messages alert parents to students who are not in school each day.
- **Meal balance alerts**—These alerts are sent to parents who need to replenish student meal balances.