

Notification of Student Absences using Mobile Phone Text Messages

From 28/3/16, parents/guardians or caregivers will be informed by mobile phone message – Short Message Service (SMS) each time their child is away from school.

At Aldgate PS, student attendance and student safety is a high priority.

We know that students who attend regularly are more likely to be successful and safe at school.

To improve our attendance and safety procedures, we will be informing parents/caregivers about any unexcused absences for their child.

The school expects parents/caregivers to **contact the school in advance** if they know their child is to be absent or late.

From 18/3/16, an SMS text message will be automatically sent to the mobile phones of parents explaining that our records show that your child is absent from school.

The message will read as follows:

Aldgate PS records show Jennifer Smith is absent MON 23/3/16. Pls reply SMS student name/absence reason/abs date

The message will arrive on the phone displaying the number, “0427016460”. Parents should store this number in their mobile phone under “Aldgate PS” so that when the message arrives, the parent is aware the message has come from the school. It is recommended that parents create a text message template for each child, to use when advising the school in advance of an absence. Alternatively simply press the reply option on your mobile phone when you receive a message from the school and add your son or daughter’s name, year, date of absence and the reason they are absent or late.

e.g. Steven Scott, Year 5 was sick yesterday (Tuesday 15th November)

Text version = “Steven S yr5 sick tues 15 nov”

Parents are encouraged to use the SMS function on their mobile phone as this is the cheapest and quickest way of communicating with the school.

If your child is absent and a reason has been provided, then parents *will not* receive an SMS.

SMS has become more than a fun way for kids to communicate. It’s become a powerful messaging system that is increasingly being used by government and business around the world.

Once we fully implement Messageyou for absences, some of the other uses could include notification of:

Reminders re: Parent Teacher nights, sports days or other significant events

Cancellation of events

Reminders to volunteer workers

Plus other uses we will discover once we start using the system!

There are many advantages for parents and the school to adopt this system and they include:

- **Improved ability to reach parents.** At times, it can be difficult to reach parents by traditional communications. Important voice messages left on answering machines at home or at work may be accessed by unauthorized persons. Email messages are hard to receive unless parents have continuous access to a computer. Parents can be at work, in meetings, travelling or simply cannot take a call. It can take a long time before parents are informed to

contact the school. Similarly it can be difficult for parents to reach the correct staff member by personal phone call at times when the school phone lines are busy.

- **Faster communication** – it takes a long time for school staff to individually make phone calls to each parent. Using SMS we can get important messages to parents faster. Using SMS, we can send a message to one or a group of people instantly knowing the majority of parents who have a mobile phone will receive the message personally.
- **Expense** – Currently, it's very expensive, both from a monetary and time perspective for school staff to call parents. The school would prefer to use the savings on better education and facilities for all students rather than on communication expense. It is also less expensive for parents with timed mobile phone plans to send a text message, than phone the school.
- **Personal, Confidential & Discrete** – For a parent, receiving a text message on your phone regarding your child is private, discrete and less disruptive than any other form of communication. Unlike other forms of communication, messages are not left for others to find out about.

Updating Parent Mobile Phone Numbers

As part of the process of implementing this exciting new system, the school is seeking your assistance. We already has an extensive list of parents mobile numbers, however we would like to make sure our records are fully up-to-date.

At your earliest convenience – and **before** 18th March 2016 please telephone the school or go 'online' or complete the attached form to update your families mobile phone numbers.

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation. We look forward to making this exciting transition, and to improving our communication with you.

(Please tear off and return to the school by **18/3/16**)

First Contact Person

Student Name: _____ Year Level: _____
Parent / Guardian 1 Name: _____ Mobile: _____
Address: _____ Home: _____
_____ Post Code () Work: _____
Email: _____

Second Contact Person

Student Name: _____ Year Level: _____
Parent / Guardian 2 Name: _____ Mobile: _____
Address: _____ Home: _____
_____ Post Code () Work: _____
Email: _____