

SchoolReach Communication

In our effort to improve communication and involvement between parents and ICS, we have contracted with the SchoolReach telephone broadcast system, which is a company specializing in school-to-parent communications. SchoolReach will allow us to make automated phone calls regarding emergency school closings, student lateness and absences, as well as reminders about things like early dismissal Wednesdays and report card conferences and meal account balances.

When used, the service will simultaneously call all phone numbers in our selected parent contact lists and will deliver a recorded message from a school. The service will deliver the message to both live answer and answering machines. No answers (phones ringing over 40 sec.) and busy signals will be automatically retried twice in fifteen minute intervals after the initial call.

NOTE: 1) This requires NO registration by the parent on the SchoolReach website. 2). All information and contact numbers are strictly secure and confidential and are only used for the purposes described herein.

Here is some specific information you should know:

- **Caller ID:** The Call ID will display [xxx-xxx-xxxx], which is the main number for [school name].
- **Live Answers:** There is a short pause at the beginning of the message, usually just a few seconds. Answer your phone as you normally would; “hello” and hold for the message to begin. Multiple “hello’s” will delay the message. Inform all family members of this process who may answer your phone.
- **Answering Machines:** The system will detect that your machine has answered and will play the recording to your machine. The phone will ring for up to 40 seconds, but make sure your machine answers after four rings or you may miss the message.
- **Message Repeat:** At the end of the message you will be prompted to ‘press any key’ to hear the message again. This is very helpful when a child answers the phone and hands it to a parent, who can then ‘repeat’ the message in its entirety.
- **Attendance:** If your school is using SchoolReach for daily attendance, you will be notified each day your child misses a required number of classes. To minimize these calls, make sure to inform the school when you KNOW your child will miss classes on a given day.

If you have any questions, please contact Tr. LaVeta at lavetam@independencecharter.org or 215-238-8000 extension 2226. In order for this system to work effectively, ICS families need to keep the school notified of any changes to your telephone number(s).

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SchoolReach, the service provider, uses the best available technology in the industry to detect the difference between human answer and machine or voicemail answer.

Here's how detection works:

1. The system detects and measures the voice energy when the phone is answered.
2. The system measures this energy in combination with the background noise and line impairments.
3. If the system determines that it is a "live" answer it will immediately start playing the message.
4. If the system determines that it is a machine, it will wait for three full seconds of silence before playing the message with a maximum wait time of twenty seconds.
5. If the system cannot make a determination, it will default to answering machine thus requiring several seconds of silence for the message to play. In this case, you may hear a prompt to "press any key to hear the message immediately."

Some reasons for false detection:

1. Loud background noise; television, radio, general noisy environment.
2. A cordless phone that has static or other foreign noise.
3. Not saying "hello" or repeatedly saying "hello".
4. Cellular phones which, when called, have the 'ringback tones' music option.
5. Answering machine/voice mail greetings which are too long or have long pauses in speech.

What can be done to remedy this?

1. Do not say "hello" more than once. If the system detected your answer incorrectly, all noise will reset the three-second counter.
2. If, after you answer, the message does not immediately play, cover the mouthpiece of the phone to cutout all background noise. The message should begin after three seconds.

Please be patient with us as we institute this system and share your feedback with us; we anticipate it being a great asset to our efforts to keep ICS families well-informed.