RSU 18 SchoolMessenger App Guide

This document is intended for internal use only.

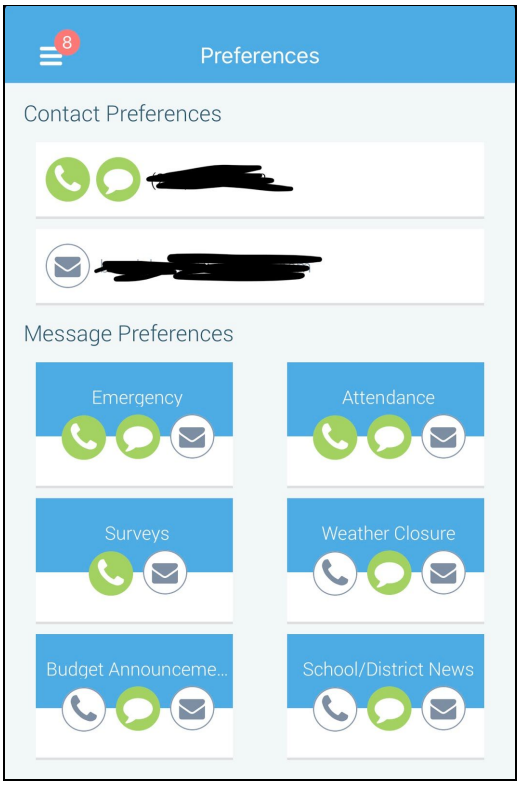
Overview

The SchoolMessenger app enables parents, students, and staff to set their call, text, and email preferences based on broadcast types. Learn more about the SchoolMessenger App

RSU 18 has six defined broadcast types, listed below, with examples of when these would be used. These broadcast types and descriptions are visible when using the app.

Emergency

Fires, dangerous persons, health risks, toxic spills, bomb threats



Attendance

Notification of student absence and/or tardy

Budget Announcement

Notify parents, students and staff of budget related news.

School/District News

PTO meetings, curriculum night announcements, picture day info, newsletters or alternate bus routes.

Weather Closure

School closing, delayed start, or early release due to inclement weather.

Surveys

Gathering input from staff, students and parents.

As you can see, the icons under each broadcast type indicate the selected preference. If it is highlighted green it means it is active and the user will receive a call, text, or email respectively.

Revised by Adam Murray on 3/27/19

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Support

Support staff in each building and some of Central Office will get questions as the SM app is rolled out. Below is a list of frequently asked questions you are encouraged to read.

How are parents notified of this new feature?

Information will be available on our website at https://rsu18.org/school-messenger-app/. We will make this link available on the front page of our website and also the RSU 18 Facebook page beginning April 1st, 2019.

How do I get the SchoolMessenger app?

The SchoolMessenger app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store on iOS devices or the Google Play Store on Android devices.

How do I register for SchoolMessenger?

Users including staff, students, and parents can sign up for SchoolMessenger directly from the app or from a browser at https://go.schoolmessenger.com

How does SchoolMessenger identify the user?

During the signup process, users must enter an email address that matches their contact information in PowerSchool.

What if a parent cannot register?

Ask what email address the parent is entering during the registration process. Verify that the email address matches what is in their contact record in PowerSchool.

Can parents disable calling for the Emergency broadcast type?

No. A school emergency is a unique broadcast type that is covered by the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) and requires at least one phone number be selected.

The district does not use this broadcast type unless there is a true emergency. As an alternative, we have the Weather Closure broadcast type. Weather Closure is also TCPA compliant but gives users the flexibility of completely disabling calls. Learn more about TCPA

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Can parents disable calling for the Attendance broadcast type?

No. Similar to the Emergency broadcast type, a phone number must be selected for this broadcast type. If a student is unaccounted for, TCPA considers this a type of emergency. Learn more about TCPA

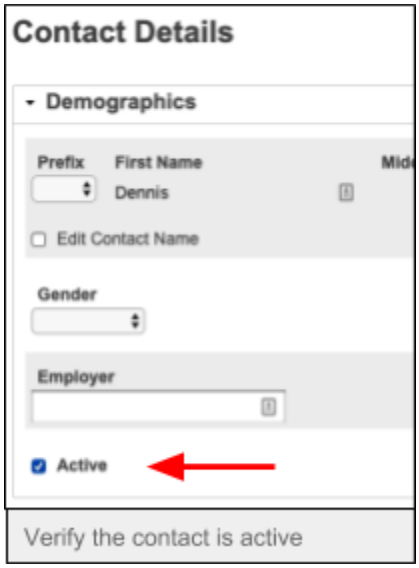
Can users manage preferences for other users?

No. At this time there is no way to change preferences of other users. For example, a parent might want to manage preferences for a grandparent. Alternatively, a SchoolMessenger account could be setup for the grandparent and then managed separately.

A parent is not receiving phone calls that believes they should be. How do I address this?

There are a variety of reasons why a parent may not receive a broadcast. Specifically in the SchoolMessenger app, it is possible that the parent opted out of calls, texts, or emails for a specific broadcast type.

1. Verify the contact is set to active (see image)
2. Ensure that the parent meets the criteria selected for the broadcast. For instance, if a broadcast is only sent to custodial parents, only the PowerSchool contacts with the custody flag checked would receive the call.
3. Verify that the parent has an active relationship with the student.



Verify the contact is active

The last thing to check would be that the parent's phone number is not in our "blocked" list. This is less likely but is possible and must be investigated by the tech team.

If all else fails, how do we get support?

If you are unable to help a user get setup with SchoolMessenger or wish to change contact preferences, please open a support ticket by sending an email to helpdesk@rsu18.org.

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