

St. John's Telephone Broadcast Service

Dear Parent/Guardians,

*The following is the information that was sent home in September. Our system is now up and functioning. **Tonight, I will be sending our first broadcast.** I will be calling on the Primary number. Please do not call the school. These phone calls are for information and emergency purposes so no return phone call is expected. I am sure there will be some kinks that we will need to address after this first call and I appreciate your patience and understanding as we learn this new technology.*

*Thank you!*

In our effort to improve communication between parents and school, St. John's is instituting a telephone broadcast system that will enable school personnel to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation or late start. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate general announcements or reminders. This service is provided by SchoolReach, a company specializing in school-to-parent communications. St. John's will continue to follow Prince Georges Public school closings due to snow or weather on radio & TV stations and will use this system as an overlay to the public announcements.

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 administrator. The service will deliver the message to both live answer and answering machines. No answers (phones ringing over 40 sec.) and busies will be automatically retried twice in fifteen minute intervals after the initial call.

**NOTE: 1) This system 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 301-868-2010, which is the main number for St. John's.
- **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 we determine to use SchoolReach for daily attendance, you will be notified each day your child misses school. To minimize these calls, make sure to inform the school when you KNOW your child will miss classes on a given day.

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 make every effort to provide the school with current and accurate phone information any time there is a change to ensure that you do not miss important information.

In an important effort to make the best and most accurate use of the SchoolReach Instant Parent Contact system, we will be using the following phone numbers and email:

The Primary Contact Number will be your home phone number. If no home number is provided, we will use your cell phone number. This number will be used to call you every time we send a SchoolReach call, regardless of the urgency of the message.

The Secondary Contact Number is your cell phone number. The Secondary Contact Number will be called at the same time as the Primary Number on calls where the message we are sending is of a more urgent or time sensitive nature to ensure that we get the call to you as soon as possible.



**WE HELP SCHOOLS REACH PARENTS**

We will be using the phone numbers provided on our emergency forms. We will contact you if numbers were not provide. If your phone numbers change, we are asking that you fill out the following form with the requested necessary information (See next page). After filling this out, please double check for accuracy and return it to us promptly.

Please contact me if you have any questions! Thank You!  
Susan G. Scott, Principal

## Phone Information Form

The Primary Contact Number will be used to call you every time we send a SchoolReach call, regardless of the urgency of the message.

The Secondary Contact Number will be called at the same time as the Primary Number on calls where the message we are sending is of a more urgent or time sensitive nature to ensure that we get the call to you as soon as possible.

Please consider these numbers carefully and make an effort to keep us informed as soon as possible if either number changes for any reason.

Child 1: Last Name:                      First Name:

Primary Contact Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Cont Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Child 2: Last Name:                      First Name:

Primary Contact Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Cont Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Child 3: Last Name:                      First Name:

Primary Contact Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Cont Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Child 4: Last Name:                      First Name:

Primary Contact Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Cont Number: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_



**WE HELP SCHOOLS REACH PARENTS**



*Thank you for your assistance and please be sure to return this form as soon as possible.*