

## Tips for Sending Effective Messages

The success of any communication depends on how it is received. Take care in preparing and presenting your messages. The following is designed to share the combined experience of our customers and staff for sending effective messages.

*Be careful of "Message Fatigue." This is when parents and guardians tune out messages because they have received too many communications. To keep your audience engaged, aim to send no more than 2 messages per month.*

- Make your initial notification a positive one. Rather than starting with an absence notification, start with a short message introducing parents to the SchoolMessenger notification system. Briefly explain that it will be used to provide them with relevant and timely information.
- Write your message down before recording it. Always script your message first; this will help you create a professional message that flows smoothly. Also, have someone else read the message and provide feedback.
- Practice your recordings until you find the most effective speaking volume. As with any type of recording, the volume of your voice and the distance at which you position the microphone affect the quality of the sound. By creating a practice recordings first, you can find the combination that works best for you.
- Repeat important information, such as dates and times of events, several times throughout your message. Doing so allows recipients time to it write down.
- Include who, what, when, where, why and how.
  - Who – start your messages by identifying yourself and the group/organization you are representing. This ensures that recipients immediately recognize the message as important. **Example:** This is MR. SMITH from SCHOOL DISTRICT.  
  
The other possible Who – identify who the message is directed to, who is affected by the message and who needs to take action, if any. **Example:** This message is for all ELEMENTARY SCHOOL parents.
  - What – identify what you are calling about early in your message. **Example:** I am calling to update you on the annual bake sale.

- When – when changing an event date be sure to specify the date canceled and the newly scheduled date. This is information that you should repeat.  
**Example:** The bake sale was originally scheduled for Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup> and has been rescheduled for Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. Again, the bake sale has been rescheduled for Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Where – when moving an event location be sure to clearly state the new location and also include the start time. This, again, is important information that should be repeated. **Example:** The bake sale was originally to be located in the Media Center and has been moved to the Cafeteria. Again, the bake sale has been moved to the Cafeteria.
- Why – though not as important, people like to know the reason behind change. Keep your explanation brief, but provide one. For instance: scheduling conflict, availability, resources, safety issue, weather conditions, etc. **Example:** The bake sale date has been changed because of the threat of school closure due to weather conditions.
- How – this may not apply to all messages, but if it does – indicate how a plan is going to be executed, how people can help, or how to respond. Be clear and concise in your instructions. **Example:** If you volunteered to contribute or assist with the bake sale please call your student’s teacher to confirm that you are still able to participate.
- **Complete Message:** This is MR. SMITH from SCHOOL DISTRICT. This message is for all ELEMENTARY SCHOOL parents. I am calling to update you on the annual bake sale. The bake sale was originally scheduled for Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup> and has been rescheduled for Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. Again, the bake sale has been rescheduled for Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. The bake sale was originally to be located in the Media Center and has been moved to the Cafeteria. Again, the bake sale has been moved to the cafeteria. The bake sale date has been changed because of the threat of school closure due to weather conditions. If you volunteered to contribute or assist with the bake sale please call your student’s teacher to confirm that you are still able to participate.
- Be professional, but do not be afraid to have fun. Many schools have been able to deliver important information while putting a smile on a parent’s face.
- Ask for feedback from your recipients. Ask if the messages you are sending are clear and how they could be improved. Find out what information recipients desire and how often they want to hear from you.