Understanding SchoolMessenger

Since the district expanded the use of SchoolMessenger to send email and text messages to enhance communication with parents and staff members, there have been questions about how the service works. A system like this requires a lot of moving parts in order for it to meet the expectations of the clients.

Listed below are some tips to help ensure SchoolMessenger works for you.

(Parents/Guardians) Make sure the district has your correct contact information

Multiple guardian records are maintained for each student in the district's student information system (SIS). The SIS is our source for extracting contact information to send to SchoolMessenger. It is important for us to not only have your correct contact information, but we must also have it in the correct field. Here is an example of how we store phone numbers for a given contact.

Phone Type*		Phone Number*	Ext.	Listing Status	Delete
H	Home/Primary	(234)567-8901	x	L - Listed	☐
M	Mobile		x	L - Listed	☐
W ⬇	Work	(123)456-7890	x cell	L - Listed	☐
⬇			x	L - Listed	☐

We have a process that runs every night, to pull the above information into a file and send it to SchoolMessenger. This is the information we use to send mass notifications to guardians. As part of this process, we take whatever information is in the **Mobile** field and map it to the **SMS Text** field in SchoolMessenger. Therefore, if your mobile number is stored in the **Home/Primary** field because your mobile phone is also your landline, or it is stored in the **Work** field because that is how the system used to store mobile numbers, then your mobile number is never being sent to SchoolMessenger for the purposes of receiving text messages.

Please contact your building to verify that your contact information is correct and that we have it stored in the correct fields. Remember, to receive text messages from SchoolMessenger we MUST have a valid mobile number listed in the **Mobile** field. If this is your only phone, it should be stored in BOTH the **Home/Primary** and **Mobile** fields. Once the information has been updated, please allow 24-48 hours for this information to be synchronized with SchoolMessenger. Once the information is updated, you will need to give permission to SchoolMessenger for us to text you. Please check the section below titled "Managing your preferences in SchoolMessenger" for multiple ways to update your preferences at SchoolMessenger to give that permission.

NOTE: The Home/Primary number of the primary guardian is the number used for attendance calls.

(Employees) Make sure the district has your correct contact information

In employee records, we map your **Personal Cell Phone** number that is listed in Employee Access Center (**EAC**) to the **SMS Text** field in SchoolMessenger. If this number is not in the appropriate field, you will

not receive text messages from SchoolMessenger. This information can be updated using Employee Access Center. Employee Access Center can be accessed by going to the following URL:

https://eac5.midlandps.org/eac51/Login.aspx

In Employee Access Center please do the following:

1. In the left column, please click on the Demographic Information link under the Employee Tasks header.
2. Right under the bar labeled Information, there is a button labeled Update. Please click the Update button.
3. In the right hand column about ⅔ of the way down is a box labeled Personal Cell Phone. Please enter your cell phone number, including area code, into the box. It should be in the format 555-555-1212 for the system to use it.
4. Finally, please click the save button at the bottom of the screen.

The updated information then becomes a pending change. HR is notified about the change and approves it and then the nightly process sends the new/updated information to SchoolMessenger. Please allow 24-48 hours after HR approves the change for this information to be synchronized to SchoolMessenger.

Managing your preferences in SchoolMessenger

Once your contact information is in SchoolMessenger, there are multiple ways that you can manage your preferences in SchoolMessenger. These preferences allow you to specify what types of communication you allow for different categories of information.

Self-service for opt-in/opt-out of text message service

Once your contact information is correct, you have the ability to enable and disable the SchoolMessenger text messaging service for your mobile number. To allow SchoolMessenger to send you text messages, simply text **Y** to **67587**. You will immediately receive a confirmation message. To prevent SchoolMessenger from sending you text messages, simply text **STOP** to **67587**. You may send either one of these requests as many times as you'd like.

SchoolMessenger preferences through the web

SchoolMessenger has a website that allows parents and staff to update their preferences. The site is https://go.schoolmessenger.com/ Once at the site you can login, if you already have set up an account or you can set up an account. To set up an account, you must use the same address that is in the system for you. Parents, this would be the contact email address that you provided for our School Information System. Employees, this would be your MPS email address.

SchoolMessenger mobile app for iOS or Android

In the Google Play store or the Apple iTunes Store, you will find an app called SchoolMessenger that is created by Reliance Communications. This is the official SchoolMessenger app and will allow you to set your preferences and also allow you to receive communications directly through the app if you wish.

Unsubscribe from email broadcasts

If you would like to no longer receive email from the district via SchoolMessenger, simply click the **Unsubscribe** link displayed at the bottom of the email message. This will tell SchoolMessenger to no longer send you email.

If you unsubscribe in error or change your mind and would like to resume receiving email from the district, please contact the school and ask to have the block removed from your email.

Text messages for students

Students are not currently eligible to receive text messages from Midland Public Schools. The district does not currently store mobile numbers for students, therefore, we have no information to send to SchoolMessenger. *Note: students can follow the district on Twitter at @midlandps if they have a Twitter account.*