NLPS Parent Guide

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What is School Messenger?

- It is a communication system with a variety of tools to enhance communication between parents and teachers, schools and the division.

- Parents can receive automated phone calls, emails and text messages.

- Teachers can set up two-way conversations with parents.

- Parents can report absences.

What do parents need to do?

- Make sure the school has up-to-date contact information for all parents that want to receive messages (you can do this by filling out your Student Update and Verification Form).

- Consent to text messages by texting Y to 978-338.

- Download the app and sign up for an account. (You do not need to do this if you prefer to use a web browser).

What can I do in the app?

- Report an absence for your child.

- See all of the voice, email and text messages sent to you.

- Set preferences for how you want to receive messages.

- Have a conversation with your child's teacher (if they have started one).

- Enable push notifications.

Downloading the App

- Look for the app with this icon
- Tap on Sign Up
- Enter an email address - it MUST be the same one you have provided to your child's school
- Enter a password - It must have at least one uppercase character, one lowercase character and one digit.
- Make sure the location is set to Canada
- Check your email account for a verification message (check your spam folder if you don't see one in your inbox)

How do I know if it connected correctly?
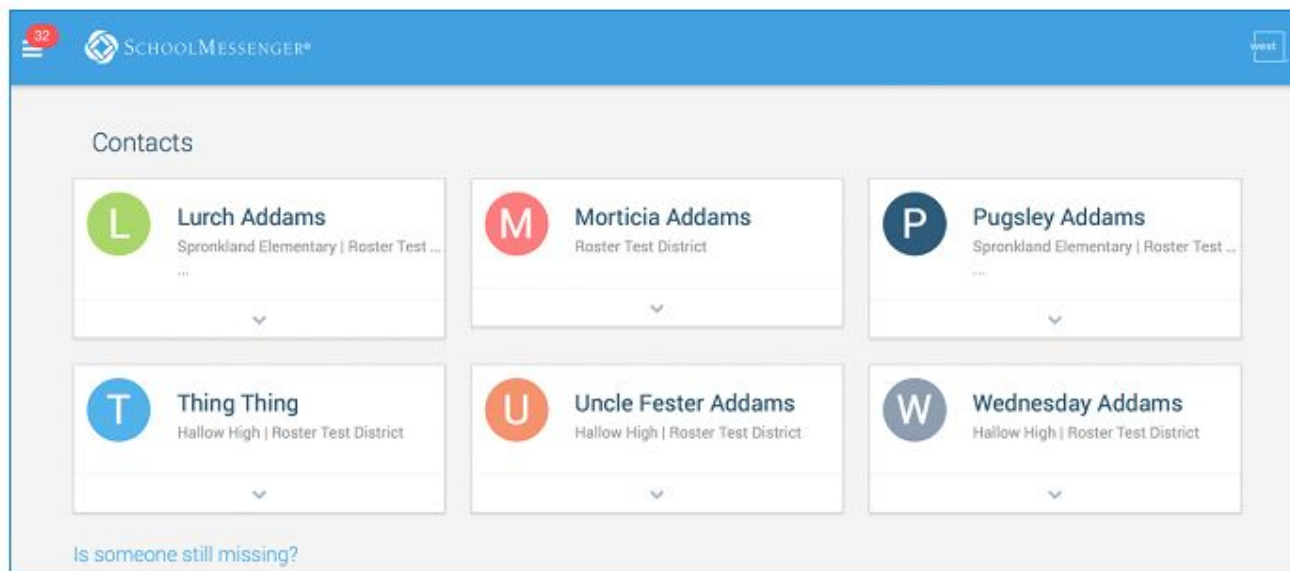
- Click on the three horizontal lines on the left
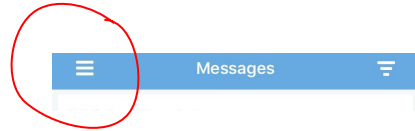
- You should see the following options:
  - Messages
  - Attendance
  - Preferences
  - Contacts...
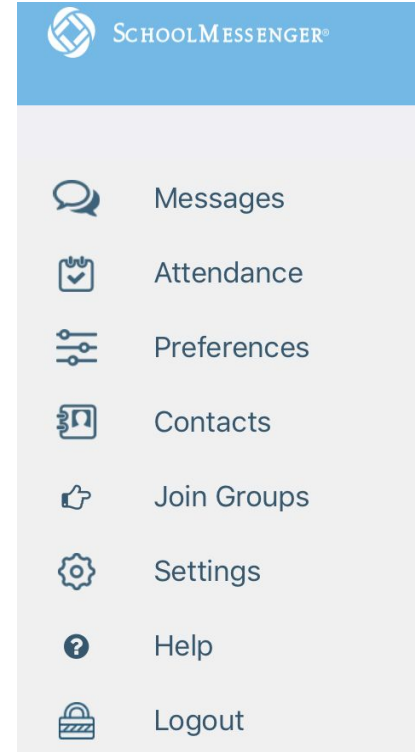
How do I know if it connected correctly?

- Under Contacts you should see your child's name with their school underneath. If the info is correct, you have connected properly.

What if I don't have a phone?

- Everything you can do in the app, you can also do in a web browser - on tablet, laptop or desktop computer that has Internet access.

- There are two options for accessing School Messenger on your computer:
  - Through the PowerSchool Parent Portal
  - At go.schoolmessenger.ca

What if I don't have a phone? Parent Portal

- Log in to the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#)

- Click on School Messenger on the left hand side

- Follow the prompts to connect your account

Messages

When you open the app or log into go.schoolmessenger.ca, it will open on the Messages screen. This displays all of the messages and conversations sent to you in the last 30 days. The most recent message will appear first. Unread messages have a blue bar on the left hand side. Attendance messages are in red.

There are two types of messages:

- Broadcast Messages - voice, email and text messages sent to you by your child's teacher, school or the division

- Conversations - two-way messaging with your child's teacher(s)

Broadcast Messages

- Appear with a title at the top followed by the name of the sender and the type of message (Attendance, Parent Contact, General)
- A circle with your child's initials will appear in the lower left hand - if you have multiple children, there will be a different coloured circle for each one
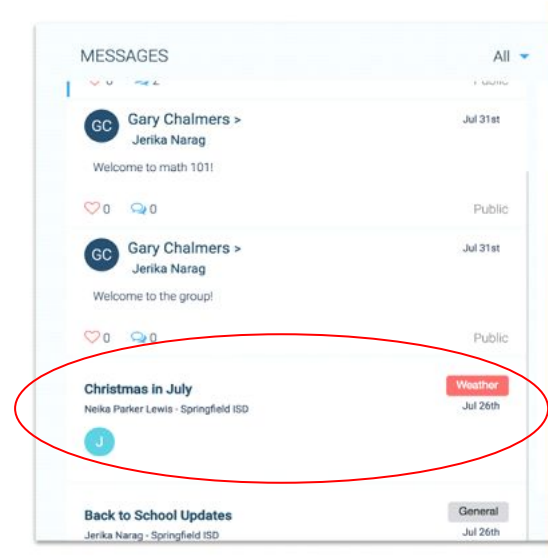
Conversations

- Appear with a round icon with the teacher's initials at the top of the message

- Names of recipients (if it includes more than one parent) will appear underneath the teacher's name, followed by the message
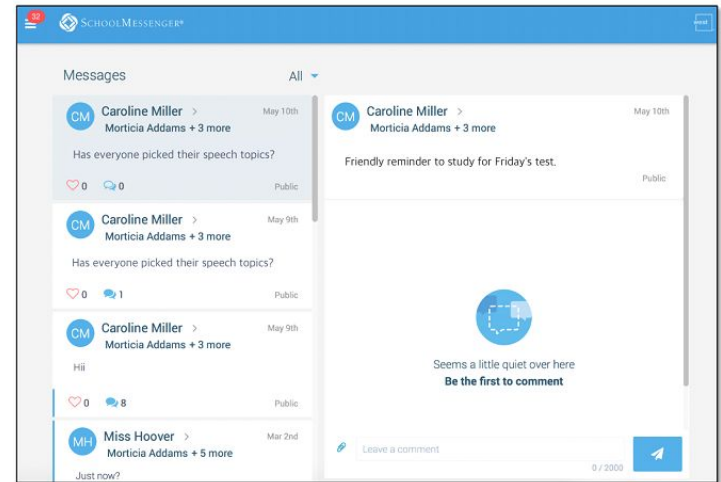
Conversations continued...

- Conversations can only be initiated by your child's teacher. If they choose not to use this method of communication, you can not send them messages this way.

- You do not need to join a group or enter a group code to connect with your child's teacher(s). You are automatically connected to them.

- You may need to join a group with a group code for extracurricular activities. If that is the case, you will be provided with a code.

Conversations continued...

- You may not be able to respond to every conversation message sent to you. Teachers have the option to not allow comments, allow everyone to see replies, or allow only the teacher to see replies.

- If the word PUBLIC appears in the bottom right-hand corner of the message, that means that everyone the message has been sent to will be able to see any comments that you enter.

Filtering Messages

- Click on the three lines that look like an inverted triangle (right hand side on your phone)
- Choose the types of messages you want to see:
  - Unread
  - All Messages
  - Attendance
  - Conversation
 - General
  - Parent Contact
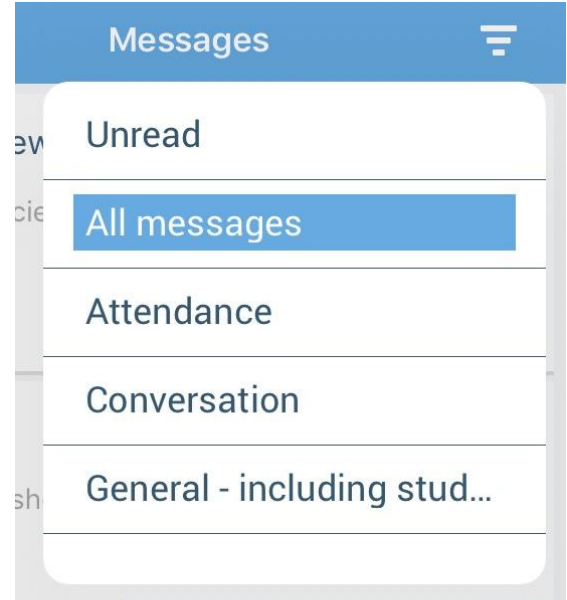
Preferences

- Allows you to control what messages you will receive.

- You need to have one phone number activated for emergency calls and attendance notifications.

- Click on a phone number or email to specify what messages you want to receive or click on the type of message ie/ emergency and indicate how you would like to receive those messages.

SCHOOLMESSENGER®

Messages
Attendance
Preferences
Contacts
Join Groups
Settings
Help
Logout
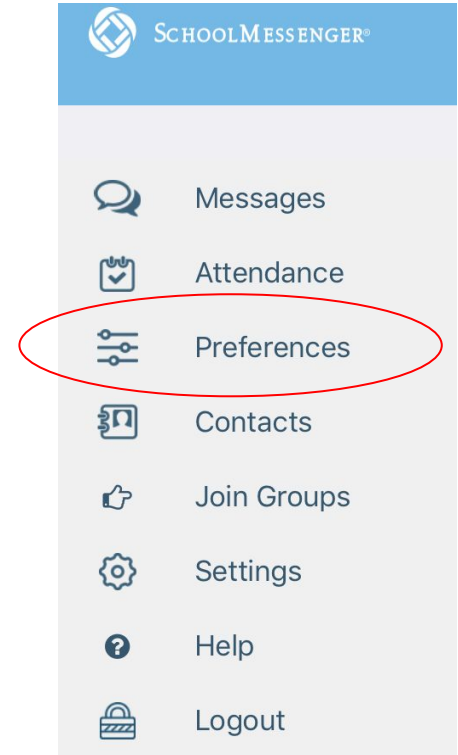
Preferences

- If you see a phone number or email address that is incorrect, please contact your child's school to update it.

- Each parent needs to set their own preferences.
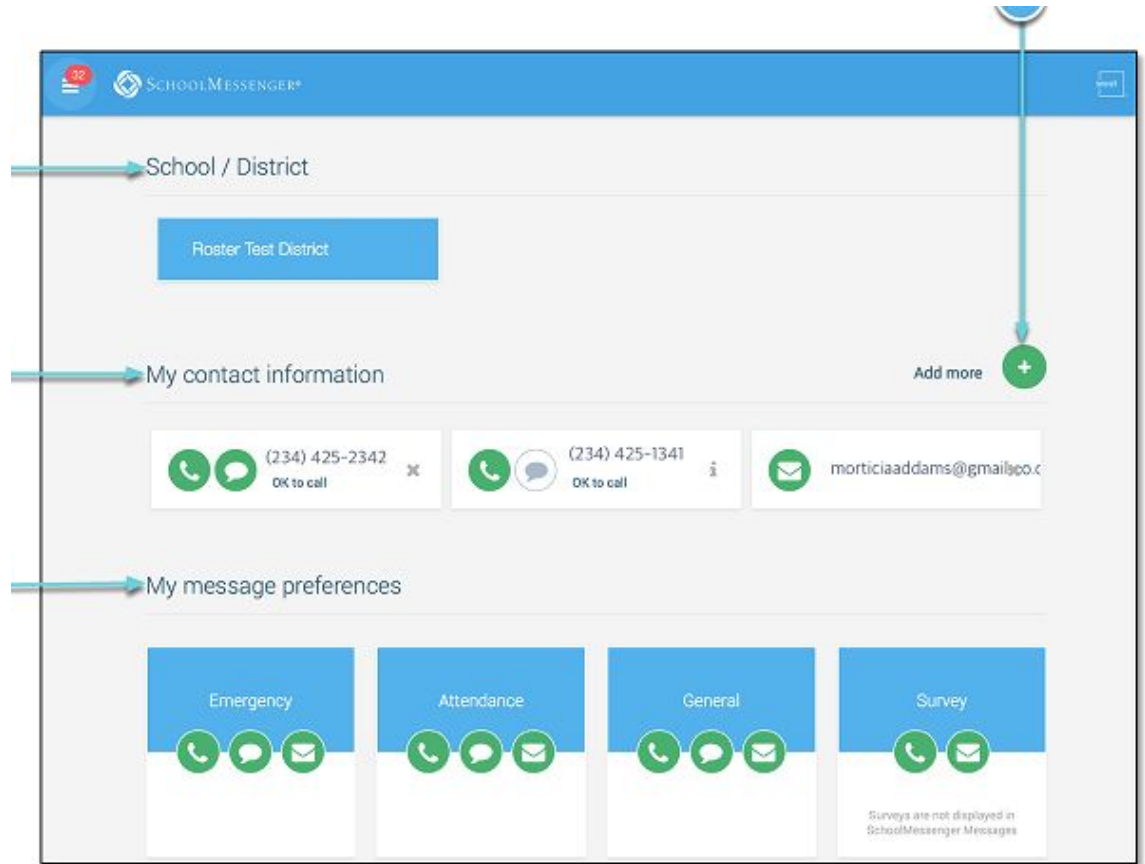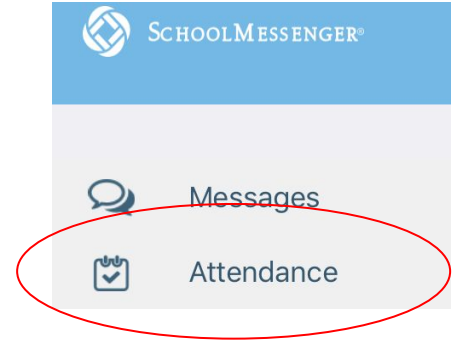
Attendance - Reporting an Absence

- In the left-hand menu (three equal lines), click on Attendance.
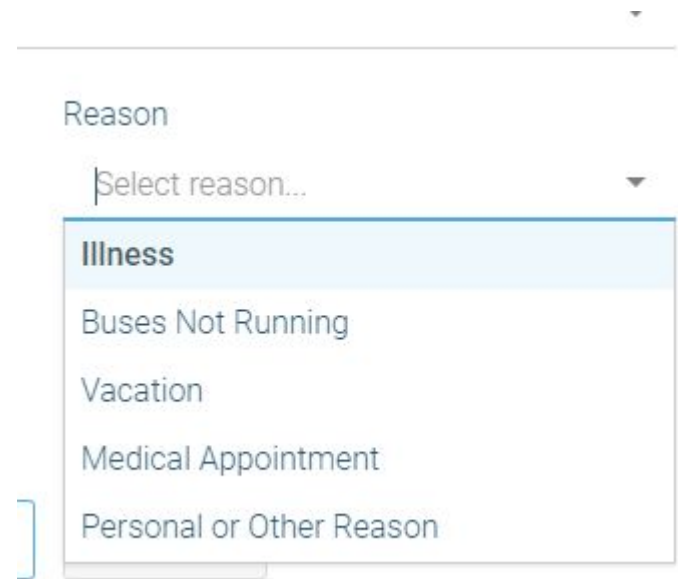
- Click on Report an Absence

- Select who will be absent.
  If you have more than one child who will be absent, you have to report each absence separately.

Attendance - Reporting an Absence

- Select the type of absence:
  - Full Day
  - Late
  - Early Departure
  - Leave and Return
  - Multiple Day (cannot select more than three consecutive days)

- Select the absence reason:
  - Illness
  - Buses not running
  - Vacation
  - Medical Appointment
  - Personal or Other Reason

Reason

Select reason...

Illness

Buses Not Running

Vacation

Medical Appointment

Personal or Other Reason

Attendance - Reporting an Absence cont...

- Click on the date of the absence - you can report in advance

- In the calendar, you can see all of the absences you have reported and you can edit any that have not already passed. So if you added an absence for an upcoming medical appointment and it is cancelled or rescheduled, you can click on it and delete it or change the date.

Notifications

To get a notification on your phone whenever you receive a message:

- Click on Settings
  - Click on Push Notifications
  - Select the types of messages you want to receive push notifications for

- In the Settings on your phone, click on Notifications
  - Choose SchoolMsgr
  - Select Allow Notifications
  - Adjust Notification Setting to your Preferences

Frequently Asked Questions

- Do I have to download the app or set up an account?
    - You will still get phone calls, emails and texts (if you consent), but you won't be able to have conversations.
    - You can still report an absence using the toll-free number 1-833-288-7008 or by calling your child's school directly

- I texted my child's teacher but didn't get a reply?
    - School Messenger does not allow for text message responses. If you reply to a message from 978-338 no one receives it. If you wish to follow up on a text you receive, please contact your school or teacher with a phone call or email.

Frequently Asked Questions

- What happens if I don't report my child absent?
    - School Messenger sends parents an email and a push notification (if they have the app).
    - 5 minutes later, if the parent has not reported the absence, they are sent a text message.
    - 5 minutes later, if the absence has not been reported, they receive a phone call.
    - Schools may send out automated notifications again or start calling parents directly (at all contact numbers).

Frequently Asked Questions

- Can students report themselves absent?
    - Parents can set a PIN to prevent that
        - In Attendance section, go to Settings in top right hand corner and then manage PIN settings
    - In addition, even if you don't set a PIN, parents are emailed a confirmation whenever an absence is reported - so if student logged in and reported an absence, their parent(s) would receive notification that an absence was reported

Frequently Asked Questions

- Do I have to use the app to report an absence?
  There are four ways to report an absence:
    - Use the School Messenger App
    - Online: go.schoolmessenger.ca (or access through the Parent Portal)
    - 1-833-288-7008 toll-free
    - Call the school directly

- When I get a call about an absence can I respond?

    - You will be prompted to confirm the absence and then it walks you through the steps to report it

Thank You!

If you have a question we haven't answered in this presentation please contact us.

NLPS Communications

communications@nlsd.ab.ca

780-826-3145 ext 2014