

## **West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science Telephone Broadcast Service**

Dear Parent,

In our effort to improve communication between parents and school, WMAES is implementing 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. WMAES will continue to report school closings due to snow or weather on TV and our website, and will use this system as an overlay to the public announcements.

When used, the service will 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.

### **PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:**

- 1) This 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 616-791-7454, which is the main number for WMAES.
- **Live Answers:** There is a short pause at the beginning of the message, usually a few seconds. Answer your phone as you normally would; “hello” and hold for the message to begin. Multiple “hellos” will delay the message. Inform all family members who may answer your phone of this process.
- **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. Make sure that 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 your school is using SchoolReach for daily attendance,

you will be notified each day that your child misses a required number of classes. To minimize these calls, make sure to inform the school when you KNOW your child will miss classes on a given day.

If you have any questions, please contact WMAES at 616-791-7454.

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 are asking that you fill out the following form with the requested necessary information (See next page). After filling this out for each of your children that attend our school, please double check for accuracy and return it to us promptly.

Thank You,

Josh Hahn  
Elementary Principal

Scott Morgan  
Secondary 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: ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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