



BrightArrow Guide for Parents

To enhance communication between your school and parents, your school is now using the BrightArrow telephone, email, text, and social media message communication system that enables school personnel to notify all households and parents by telephone, email, text, or app alerts within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event. It also may be used periodically to communicate general announcements or reminders.

The system includes mechanisms for parents to provide feedback, both informational and critically urgent, to school personnel. This service is provided by BrightArrow Technologies, a company that specializes in school-to-parent communications.

These communications can be sent by the school's administration, your student's teachers, or other staff as appropriate. Since the communication can come to you in numerous forms, here are some general guidelines for receiving and responding to these communications.

BrightArrow Communication Mechanisms

Emails

The school will send emails to parents either standalone or in conjunction with voice calls or text messages. Emails can give you more detail than what can be in a short call or message, and can include attachments and graphics when appropriate. You can reply to the email unless it is sent using a "DoNotReply" email address. If it is from a teacher, typically you can reply to it. School-wide emails sometimes are designed for outgoing information purposes only.

Text Messages

The BrightArrow system also allows school personnel to send parents text messages. Once a phone number is opted-in, all text messages will come from the Short Code 79041. The initial message asking you to opt-in will be coming from a phone number in the format with 424-###-####, so please be aware that those text messages are coming from your school.

The school may announce with an email when they are sending the opt-in message. Simply reply YES to the message asking you to opt-in and your phone number will receive future text messages. You may also at any time opt-in to text messages from your school by sending YES to the short code 79041. You must have your phone number on file with the school to receive text messages, this is an opt-in mechanism, not a subscribe mechanism. Once you opt-in, BrightArrow will send you a confirmation that your phone number is opted-in.

Sometimes a message will arrive in all three forms (email, text, voice) so if you want to limit the number of different types of messages, we suggest you click on the Parent Portal link and choose what types of messages you would like to receive.

Voice Calls

For the most urgent or important messages, voice calls are sent. Details on how to best receive these calls are described to your left. If you do not answer the call immediately and see the school's phone number showing as Caller ID, please listen to the voice mail it leaves rather than calling the school back. The message is typically sent to all parents at once and calling the school back can overload the school personnel.

For more information: www.BrightArrow.com

More BrightArrow Communication Mechanisms

Social Media Posts

If you go to the school's Facebook page or receive Twitter tweets, the above messages may also be sent to you by app alerts from Facebook or Twitter.

Text-in/Dial-in Tip Line

Most of the communications described up to now are messages being sent from the school to parents. If parents or students have important urgent information or tip line feedback for the school, they can either reach out to their teacher directly or text or call into the school's automated tip line if the school has one enabled. The phone number will be provided in a subsequent communication. The tip line can be used for any issue of immediate concern, such as bullying incidents or other serious issues that the school administration should know about.

Two-way Communication Web Link

Your school may also set up a two-way web-based communication tool. This allows parents to ask questions, make suggestions, or raise concerns regarding any topic they deem appropriate. The BrightArrow system lets them choose the topic so the communication is directed to the appropriate person in the school's administration. The school employee will then respond to the question or forward it to the appropriate person to respond, and the response is automatically delivered via email back to the originating parent. The response can also ask for clarification or details; the stream of communication is logged and tracked accordingly to ensure complete and timely responses to parent questions and concerns.

Parent Portal

If the school chooses to enable the BrightArrow Parent Portal, a link will be available in the Parent Portal. This allows you to securely login and adjust how you would like to receive messages. The system automatically populates your telephone numbers and emails from your data records, and you can use this portal to designate which phones you would like to use to receive texts or voice calls. You can enter additional phones or email addresses. The Parent Portal also gives you access to any prior voice calls, text messages, and emails that had been sent to you.

BrightChat – Two-way Instant Messaging App

Your school may also subscribe to BrightChat – BrightArrow's secure, automatically configured, two-way instant messaging app used by teachers, coaches and administrators to send messages to parents, students and staff. BrightChat provides a fast, easy and flexible way to send messages, allowing the recipient to quickly respond to the group or privately to the sender. It allows you to type, record audio, attach documents, and even share photos and videos seamlessly. A separate guide will be provided by your school if they subscribe to this service.

How To Receive Voice Calls

When automated phone calls are made, BrightArrow simultaneously calls all the phone numbers in the school's parent contact database. It delivers the message if answered live or sent to voicemail. Information to know:

- The Caller ID will display the school's phone number(s) or the BrightArrow phone number 855-994-4242.
- Please answer your phone as you normally would by saying "Hello" (or equivalent) immediately, and stay quiet. The message should start playing right away.
- Voicemail: The system detects if your voicemail has answered and will play the recording after the beep.
- Message repeat: At any time during the message you may press Star on your telephone to repeat the message.

BrightArrow uses leading edge technology in the industry to detect the difference between human answer and voicemail. How the detection works:

- The system calls your phone and starts speaking immediately when you answer.
- By listening while it is speaking, the system guesses whether it has reached a live person or voicemail. In order to detect a live person, simply say "Hello" or an equivalent response when you answer, and then be quiet to hear the message.
- If it is not sure whether it reached a live person or voicemail, the system must allow for the possibility that it might be voicemail, so it stops the audio upon hearing sounds and starts it up again upon hearing silence – that way it will reliably leave a full message on a voicemail or answering machine.

Some reasons for false detection, causing the system to stop and repeat:

- Loud background noise, television, radio, ring back tones, or a noisy environment.
- Not saying hello, delaying saying hello, saying hello more than once, or talking while the system is speaking to you.

What can be done to remedy this?

- Say "Hello" immediately and then be silent, and do not say hello more than once.
- If the message stops and restarts repeatedly, mute your telephone or cover its microphone to cut out background noise.
- Alternatively, press the Star key and the message will replay from the beginning without further repeating.

