

Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 SchoolMessenger For Parents



SchoolMessenger is an automated system which enables Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 (BGRD or Division) and/or school administration to send notifications to parents/guardians in emergency situations and for general correspondence.

These notifications may be sent via phone calls, emails, and/or SMS (text) messages using contact information parents/guardians have provided in their PowerSchool account.

Types of Notifications

The types of notifications BGRD and its schools send to parents/guardians fall into three categories:

- 1) **Emergency notifications** - alerts parents/guardians to a school-specific or division-wide emergency (e.g. lockdown, evacuation, tornado, etc.).
- 2) **General notifications** - notifies parents/guardians of school-specific or division-wide information, events, programs, etc.
- 3) **Attendance notifications** - notifies parents/guardians of a student's absence.

	Examples (may include, but not limited to:)	How we will contact you	Additional information
Emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat • Intruder • Fire • Severe weather event (tornado, flood, etc.) • Police situation unfolding nearby 	All methods available in <i>SchoolMessenger</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone • Email • Text (if you have opted-in) 	Alerts are sent automatically to every phone number and email address in the alert system. In order to receive any notifications by text, you MUST OPT-IN (see below for instructions)
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-emergent school and/or Division information (e.g. newsletters, busing details, program information, events, etc.) 	According to the preferences you have outlined in <i>SchoolMessenger</i>	General notifications are optional.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-emergency communications (e.g. follow-up information, pick-up arrangements, etc.) 		
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student absences 	According to the preferences you have outlined in <i>SchoolMessenger</i>	Notifications are sent to the parent/guardian in the event of an unexplained student absence.

Managing Your Preferences

The preferences section of the *SchoolMessenger* tool allows you to indicate how you want to be contacted - you may set your preferences in either the *SchoolMessenger* area of your PowerSchool parent portal or the *SchoolMessenger* app. To ensure you receive alerts, your contact information must be kept up-to-date. Please contact your school with any changes to your contact information.

You are required to provide at least one phone number and one email address. In order to receive SMS (text) messages, you must OPT-IN (see below for more information).

In an **emergency**, we will use *SchoolMessenger* to contact all phone numbers and email addresses you have provided. If you have opted-in for text messaging, we will also contact you using that method.

Effective October 10, 2018, you will be able to choose the methods by which you receive **general** and **attendance** notifications. You can do this in the *SchoolMessenger* area of your PowerSchool parent account or the *SchoolMessenger* app.

The topics covered by general notifications may include school newsletters, busing information, or programs and events. It is important to note: after an emergency is resolved, further notifications will be classified as “general”. For example: in a school evacuation, once all students have been moved to a safe location, the emergency is considered resolved. Further updates for parents/guardians, such as student release information, will be classified as a ‘general notification’. Therefore, if you have not selected a contact method for general notifications, you will not receive those updates.

Text message OPT-IN process:

In order to send you notifications by SMS (text), we must first have your permission, known as an "OPT-IN".

Step 1: Complete the 2018-2019 Student Enrolment Verification Form

If you want to receive text notifications, you must ensure the mobile number on which you wish to receive those notifications is updated in your file. To do this, log-in to your PowerSchool parent portal and complete the 2018-2019 Student Enrolment Verification Form. If you have already completed the form, you may skip ahead to Step 2.

Step 2: Opt-In

Once you have completed the 2018-2019 Student Enrolment Verification Form, simply text "Y" to 978338. You will then receive a message from *SchoolMessenger* confirming your registration.

On October 10, 2018 we will also send an Opt-In Invitation text message to all mobile phones in the PowerSchool system which have not yet opted-in for notifications via text message. If you agree to opt-in, follow the instructions in the text message. If you do not want to receive notifications via text messages, you may ignore the message.

If you wish to receive notifications on multiple mobile devices, each number must be in your PowerSchool account and you must go through the opt-in process above using each device.

FAQs regarding SMS Text System:

How do I "Opt-In" to receive text messages?

Text "Y" to 978338.

How do I opt-out of receiving text messages?

Recipients not wishing to receive text messages to a particular number can simply do one of the following:

1. Don't opt-in and don't reply to the opt-in invitation message.
2. Text "STOP" to 978338.
3. Request that your organizations SchoolMessenger system administrator add the number to the account's phone number block list.

I “Opted-In”, but I’m not receiving texts?

1. Ensure that the Division has your correct device number in the database (Student Information System or HR System), and that it is located in the SMS phone field(s) that are synchronized with SchoolMessenger. It may take 24 hours for a number to become active after being changed or added to the Division’s system.
2. Send a text with “Y”, from that specific device, to 978338. You should receive an opt-in confirmation message from the service.
3. If you want to receive texts on multiple devices, each device number must complete the Opt-In process, and be in the School Division's database. Please confirm with your local school if you are uncertain.
4. Confirm that the Division has actually attempted to send a SchoolMessenger broadcast which includes an SMS text message to your mobile phone number.

How do I know if it worked?

After you text one of the key words to the short code the system will ALWAYS respond back with one of three messages:

Opt-in Response: You’re registered 4 SchoolMessenger. Txt STOP quit, HELP for help. Std msg/ data rates apply Freq varies schoolmessenger.com/smsca

Opt-out Response: You’re unsubscribed from SchoolMessenger. No more messages will be sent. Reply Y to resubscribe or Help for help. Msg & data rates may apply Freq varies schoolmessenger.com/smsca

Help or Unknown Key Word Response: Reply Y to subscribe for approx 3 msgs/mo. Text STOP to quit. For more information reply HELP.

Any other response – or no response: indicates the recipient should contact their wireless device provider to have SMS messaging/premium content enabled (see below for more details).

What does it mean if I texted “Y” or “yes” and I received some sort of error message back?

If you receive what appears to be an error message, similar to one of the following, it most likely means that short code text messaging is not enabled on your wireless subscription plan:

- Service access denied
- Message failed
- Shortcode may have expired or shortcode texting may be blocked on your account
- Does not participate

These replies DO NOT indicate that the wireless provider can’t receive messages from SchoolMessenger. Rather, they are an indication that the specific mobile device does not have short code SMS texting enabled for that number (this is sometimes disabled by default on company provided cell phones). To address this, contact your wireless provider.

Note: Providers sometimes use various names for this type of texting service (e.g. short code, SMS, premium, etc.). If you simply ask about text messaging, your carrier may assume you are referring to person-to-person. Therefore be very clear to refer to “short code” text messages. Most TV programs which have a voting component use short code SMS messaging (e.g. American Idol, Dancing with the Stars). Using an example such as this can be helpful in clarifying the type of texting service you want to enable.

Will I be charged for the text messages that I receive from SchoolMessenger?

SchoolMessenger does not charge recipients for the text messages that they receive or send to the short code; however, wireless providers may charge for individual text messages, depending on the plan associated with the wireless device. Please consult your carrier if you are uncertain.