

<b>Parent/Guardian Notification System</b>	
<b>Adopted:</b> December 1, 2014	<b>Last Reviewed/Revised:</b> June 2, 2025
<b>Next Scheduled Review:</b> 2027-2028	
<b>Associated Policies &amp; Procedures:</b> <a href="#">V-18 Community Engagement and Public Consultation Policy</a> <a href="#">I-12 Emergency Response Plans for Fire, Evacuation, Lockdown, and Bomb Threat Response</a> <a href="#">VI-20 Emergency Response Plans for Fire, Evacuation, Lockdown, and Bomb Threat</a> <a href="#">II-33 Safe Arrival at School Program</a> <a href="#">VI-18 Safe Arrival at School Program</a> <a href="#">VI-47 Inclement Weather - Transportation Cancellations and Emergency School Closures</a> <a href="#">VI-40 Distribution of Materials</a>	

## Purpose

To provide the requirements and share best practices for sending electronic messages to parents /guardians through the Halton Catholic District School Board's (HCDSB) automated Parent/Guardian Notification System.

## Application and Scope

This procedure applies to all school and HCDSB communications to parents/guardians through the Parent/Guardian Notification System.

## References

[Age of Majority and Accountability Act](#)

[Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation](#)

[Education Act](#)

## Definitions

**Electronic message:** for the purposes of this procedure, an electronic message may include emails, phone messages and/or text messages.

**Parent/Guardian Notification System:** an automated system that sends electronic messages to parents and guardians.

## Principles

HCDSB values relationships, recognizing that student success and well-being are reflective of the partnership between home and school.

HCDSB prioritizes building connections and shared purpose with community to be informed and engaged.

HCDSB is committed to relaying timely, accurate information to parents/guardians on matters pertaining to their child(ren)'s education.

## Requirements

### Use of the Parent/Guardian Notification System

- The Parent/Guardian Notification System is available to elementary and secondary schools, as well as central offices of the HCDSB.
- Parent/Guardian Notification System messages may be sent by individual schools to their communities or centrally through Strategic Communications.
- Sending a school-based message by both email and phone message should only be done in emergency situations (e.g., prolonged lockdown, school closures during the school day, etc.).
- Prior to sending an emergency message through the Parent/Guardian Notification System, schools must contact Strategic Communications Services.
- The use of HCDSB's Parent/Guardian Notification System is not permitted for the distribution of materials in accordance with *Procedure VI-40 Distribution of Materials*.

**School-based messages:** (messages sent by individual schools)

**Elementary school administrators** are authorized to send out messages to their school community only. Should an elementary school administrator wish to send out a message beyond their own school community, approval to do so must be obtained from the Family of Schools Superintendent.

**Secondary school administrators** are authorized to send out messages to their own school community, and for student retention purposes, and may also communicate with parents/guardians of elementary students in their family of schools.

There are two options for sharing information with the elementary feeder schools:

- Share the message directly with the elementary school administrators in their family of schools, who will then forward it to their school community; or
- Submit the message to Strategic Communications for distribution through the Parent/Guardian Notification System.

In either case, the message must first be approved by the Family of Schools Superintendent.

**Nature of school-based messages:**

Messages relevant to the entire school community, family of schools, or targeted to a specific audience, as determined by the school administrator.

**Best practices for school-based messages:**

- Target the message to the specific audience (e.g., send the message to Grade 5 parents/guardians only if the message concerns a Grade 5 field trip).
- Phone messages sent in emergency situations should be brief and to the point (approximately 20-30 seconds). Provide only the most essential information, and direct parents/guardians to an email or the school's website for additional details.
- Establish a schedule for sending messages, so that parents/guardians become accustomed to receiving the information in a set way. It is best to establish a specific day of the week so parents/guardians expect the message.

**System-wide or multiple school messages:** *(messages from the HCDSB are sent in conjunction with the appropriate Superintendent and/or the Director's Office and/or the Strategic Communications Department.)*

**Nature of message:**

Use of the Parent/Guardian Notification System for system-wide messages is carefully considered for relevance to the entire HCDSB community or targeted to a specific audience, as determined by the appropriate Superintendent and/or the Director's Office, in consultation with the Strategic Communications Department.

**Best practices for system-wide messages:**

- Target message to the specific audience (e.g. all Kindergarten parents/guardians for Kindergarten Registrations or all Grade 8 parents/guardians for Grade 8 Parent/Guardian Information Evening)
- The Strategic Communications Department, in conjunction with the Director of Education, and/or the appropriate Superintendent of Education must approve the use of the Parent/Guardian Notification System for promotion of system-wide learning events, activities or information.
- School administrators, school office staff and appropriate HCDSB office staff shall be advised of all system-wide messages and provided a copy of the message.
- Trustees shall be copied on all school-wide, and HCDSB-wide messages.

## **Adult Students – Information Sharing and Parental/Guardian Access**

In accordance with the *Age of Majority and Accountability Act* and the *Education Act*, a student attains adult status when he or she reaches the age of 18.

- When a student turns 18 years of age, or when a student (16 or 17) has withdrawn from parental/guardian control, information about their academic progress, attendance, and access to their records can no longer be provided to their parents and/or guardians.
- Unless permission is granted by the adult student, or by the student who has withdrawn from parental/guardian control, the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) will be automatically removed as contacts from the student data base, and from the Parent/Guardian Notification System distribution list and will no longer receive school-based or system-wide messages for the adult student and/or student who has withdrawn from parental/guardian control.

## **Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation**

*Effective September, 2014, all messages sent through the Parent Notification System must be compliant with Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL).*

- [Expressed consent](#) is required to send commercial electronic messages. For the purposes of school and HCDSB communications, commercial electronic messages may include, but are not limited to, sharing information regarding school photograph providers, lunch providers, yearbook providers, etc.
- The Parent/Guardian Notification System will include only the recipients who have provided consent in the distribution lists for general communications. All recipients will receive emergency messages.
- The Parent/Guardian Notification System will automatically provide the required 'opt-out' message at the end of every email.
- In accordance with CASL, school and HCDSB personnel must include identification information at the end of each message: school and/or HCDSB name, mailing address, phone number and/or email address.

## **Training & Support**

Training and support for the technical use of the Parent/Guardian Notification System is available for school staff by contacting the IT Help Desk at: [helpdesk@hcdsb.org](mailto:helpdesk@hcdsb.org).

Messaging support is available for school staff by contacting Strategic Communications at: [communications@hcdsb.org](mailto:communications@hcdsb.org).

APPROVED:                      Regular Meeting of the Administrative Council

**Procedure No. VI-58** | Parent Notification System

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AUTHORIZED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

*Director of Education and Secretary of the Board*