

## St. Thomas the Apostle School Telephone Broadcast Service

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In our effort to improve communication, we are implementing a new telephone broadcast system that will enable personnel to notify all households and individuals by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event. 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 effective communications. It replaces our Honeywell System.

When used, the service will call all phone numbers in our selected contact lists and will deliver a recorded message from an 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 recipient 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 973-338-8505 which is the main number for St. Thomas the Apostle School.
- **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 someone other than the intended recipient initially answers, allowing the recipient to then 'repeat' the message in its entirety.

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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 St. Thomas the Apostle School with current and accurate phone information any time there is a change to ensure that you do not miss important information.

### **What to do if you think you've missed a SchoolReach voice message.**

If you ever feel you may have missed a SchoolReach voice message or just want to check to be sure, you can dial our [Message Retrieval Line](#). From whichever phone(s) you want to check for messages to, dial toll-free: **855-955-8500** and follow the prompts to hear any/all messages sent through SchoolReach over the last 30 days. Please contact the school if you suspect your phone number is not being called by the system or if you ever have a change of number.

### **Parent App**

SchoolReach makes available to parents a mobile device "app" to help keep the lines of communication open. Parents will be able to manage contact numbers, email addresses, opt-in/out preferences -- all from the convenience of a smart phone. It's FREE and available on iPhone and Android stores as "SchoolReach Parents."