

### **What is *AlertNow* ?**

*AlertNow* is a rapid alert notification system that is an effective and timely communication tool for us to communicate with parents during *emergency* and *non-emergency* situations.

### **How will *AlertNow* be used?**

*AlertNow* will allow the school district to send important information quickly – not only to parents but to staff as well – via phone and/or e-mail about *emergency situations* and school delays or cancellations due to inclement weather. In addition to notifying parents about school closings or delays, *AlertNow* will allow every school to contact parents about important school information and events.

### **As a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in East Hampton Public Schools, do I need to register or sign-up to receive messages from *AlertNow*?**

If you are a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in East Hampton Public Schools, you are not required to register for the *AlertNow* parent notification system. ALL parents and guardians of students enrolled in each of our schools are automatically enrolled in this communication system. The ability to deliver a message is only as successful as the contact information we have for our families, so please make certain we have the most up-to-date direct dial numbers and e-mail addresses. If this information changes, please let your child's school know immediately.

### **How will parents/guardians be notified by *Alert Now*?**

As the parent/guardian of a student, it is important for you to understand how messages will be delivered to you.

- For *non-emergency* messages, you will receive a telephone call most likely to your home phone.
- Should a school *emergency* occur, in addition to being called at home, you will also be notified through the various phone numbers (work, cell) you have included on your child's registration form.
- In addition to being notified by phone during a school *emergency*, you can also receive messages via e-mail.
- This new notification system has the capability of calling five of your phone numbers (home, alternate or cell, and work) and sending messages up to five different e-mail accounts for parents/guardians identified as residing with the student or identified as receiving copies of student reports.
- ***Multiple phone numbers*** and ***e-mail*** addresses will only be used to notify you during a school *emergency and early dismissals due to inclement weather*.

### **How will I know that I have received a message from *AlertNow*?**

Here is what you need to know about receiving a phone call via *AlertNow*:

- *AlertNow* will leave a message on any answering machine or voicemail.
- If the *AlertNow* message stops playing, press any key 1-9 and the message will replay from the beginning.
- Your caller ID will display your school's or the district's main number anytime a ***non-emergency*** call is generated. Caller ID will not display a name with the number.

- Your caller ID will display **411** anytime an *emergency* call is being sent. Examples of an emergency include evacuation or lockdown.

### **An *AlertNow* message was delivered to my phone, I said “hello” and no message played. Why?**

The *AlertNow* system plays the message as soon as the phone is picked up or answered. However, errors can occur if the person repeatedly says "hello" or answers in a noisy environment (i.e. traffic, children playing, loud music or television, dogs barking, etc.). Generally, if a person offers an extended greeting such that it overlaps the *AlertNow* message, the system pauses, waits for silence, and replays the message from the beginning.

With background noise, it is possible that the system is unable to detect the end of the "greeting" and thus the message did not initiate. In a noisy environment, call recipients can press any number (1-9) and the message will play from the beginning without interruption.

### **An *AlertNow* message was delivered to my phone, I said “hello” and only part of the message was delivered. Why?**

The *AlertNow* system plays the message as soon as the phone is picked up or answered. However, errors can occur if the person repeatedly says "hello" or answers in a noisy environment (i.e. traffic, children playing, loud music or television, dogs barking, etc.). Generally, if a person offers an extended greeting such that it overlaps the *AlertNow* message, the system pauses, waits for silence, and replays the message from the beginning. This could result in delivery of only a portion of the message.

With background noise, it is possible that the system is unable to detect the end of the "greeting" and thus the message did not initiate. In a noisy environment, call recipients can press any number (1-9) and the message will play from the beginning without interruption.

### **How does the *AlertNow* system distinguish a live person from an answering machine?**

In short, *AlertNow* utilizes the industry's most Advanced Answering Machine Detection (AAMD) software. The system starts the broadcast immediately upon telephone pickup; simultaneously, it is listening for interruptions. If the system is not interrupted by noise or someone speaking within the first 3.5 seconds, the message is delivered in its entirety. If the system detects a greeting longer than a few seconds, the system treats this as an outgoing message from an answering machine and will wait for a pause (usually after the beep) before delivering the message to be recorded.

### **What if the line is busy or there is no answer?**

The *AlertNow* system will make up to four attempts (depending on account settings) to reach each number, with three minutes in between each call. If the message is not delivered by the fourth attempt, it is considered a failed number. Failures happen when a phone number is busy, disconnected, invalid, etc. If you are aware of a message that was delivered, but you did not receive a call, please contact your school.

### **Why is my answering machine recording only half of the *AlertNow* message?**

If your answering machine greeting is sporadic with varied periods of silence, the system will

read this as a live person and begin playing the message, even though the machine has yet to start recording. This will result in a recording of silence (if the *AlertNow* message finishes playing before the machine begins recording) or if just the last portion of the *AlertNow* message runs over, this will also result in message cutoff. The recommended solution is to have parents set their machines to record for a longer period.

For voice mailboxes where it is necessary to enter a mailbox number, *AlertNow* is unable to leave a message.

### **My Caller ID showed that the school had called but there was no voicemail/message? Why?**

If there is a break or a substantial silence in the outgoing message, the system determines it has reached a live person and begins the message prior to the voicemail recording is engaged. Please make sure that the greeting is seamless to facilitate successful message delivery.

### **Are there other reasons why I did not receive a message on my answering machine?**

*AlertNow* will leave a message on the contact's voicemail or answering machine. However, the system is set to ring each line six times. If your answering machine is set to pick up on seven or more rings, the message may not be delivered to your machine. Therefore, we encourage you to set your machine to six rings or fewer.

### **Why doesn't the school's phone number appear on the Caller ID of my phone?**

*AlertNow* passes the caller ID information to the local telephone carriers, but it is up to those carriers to pass it along to their customers. Furthermore, different local telephone companies process Caller ID information differently. Some provide the name associated with the number, while others do not. For example, a telephone company may require an individual to subscribe to "Advanced Caller ID" in order to receive the school name along with the phone number. Unfortunately, we have no control over this feature.

### **Will the *AlertNow* system call phone numbers with extensions?**

The *AlertNow* system only works with direct-dial phone numbers. The system is unable to navigate menus or extensions.

### **I have a telemarketer screening device. How will that affect the call?**

If a contact has a device on their telephone line designed to prevent automated phone systems from connecting (e.g. TeleZapper, privacy Manager, Privacy Director, etc.), they may not receive the call. For example, with Privacy Director all unidentifiable incoming calls are rerouted and the callers must identify themselves for the call to go through. Because our system is automated, it will not identify itself; thus the call will not get through to the recipient. For screening systems that are dependent on Caller ID's, recipients can authorize access for their school's phone number through their device. Note that calls identified with the school's number on the Caller ID generally have no trouble getting through Privacy Manager type systems.