



Communication Best Practices

For Administrators of
OnSolve® One Call Now®

One Call **Now**
POWERED BY ONSOLVE

Communication is vital for keeping your school community informed. In an emergency, you need to be able to deliver messages to students, parents and staff quickly. But OnSolve One Call Now also helps you share information about events, sports tryouts, announcements, school opening delays and so much more.

OnSolve has assembled this set of communications best practices from school districts around the country that use the OnSolve One Call Now notification system.

This guide will help administrators use the system to its best advantage. Share these best practices with your users and use this guide as a template for your own communications with everyone in your schools who uses the One Call Now service.

Best Practices for OnSolve One Call Now

- **Set “timing parameters” to ensure your messages don’t go out too early or too late.** You don’t want to wake people up — unless it’s an emergency. As a general rule, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. is a recommended window for calls. Note there is an option to continue calls the following day to anyone who is not reached on the first day. However, if your message is about something of an immediate nature (i.e., letting parents know about a lockdown at your school), set a very limited window of time for that call. You do not want parents to get that call the next day. *NOTE: Parents may assume every OnSolve One Call Now call that occurs during the school day is an emergency. A best practice is to consider timing informational calls to go out after school hours.*





- **Keep messages short.** There is a 180-second limit on recorded messages but delivering your message as quickly as possible is the most effective way to make sure the full message is received. As a general rule: The shorter, the better! You may wish to repeat key parts of your message to give listeners an opportunity to absorb what you are saying.
EXAMPLE: “The Elementary School is hosting a Fall Festival from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, October 3, with games and activities for everyone. Serving for the chili supper starts at 6 p.m. and is \$5 for adults, \$3 for students. Again, the Fall Festival starts at 5 p.m. on Friday. Chili Supper serving begins at 6 p.m. See you there!”
- **Don’t call everyone when the message is relevant for only a small group.** Subgroups are your friend! If you need to send a message only to parents whose children attend the After-School Program, set up a subgroup for ASP kids. If you want to remind kids about seventh-grade football practice tryouts, send that message only to seventh-grade boys. And remember — sometimes, a personal call is best. Use your judgment.
- **Try to combine messages whenever possible.** Find a way to coordinate with “messaging” at your school to see who is sending messages, and when. This avoids frustration among parents who receive multiple calls each week (or each day), especially if some of the messages do not pertain to them.
- **Be sure your message is clear — both audibly and in content.** Speak clearly; don’t rush your words. It helps to write down the message before you record it. Don’t “clutter” your message with unnecessary verbiage. Avoid saying “today” or “tomorrow” — you can’t be sure when the message will be heard, so use specific days/dates. One Call Now is user-friendly and easy to use for both parents and administrators.
- **Help parents understand how One Call Now can help them stay informed.** Take time to show them how it works and explain how you’ll use it, including when they can expect to be contacted, the types of messages they’ll receive, when and how they can respond. Most importantly, encourage parents to register and keep their contact information current. Be sure they know how to add other family members.

- **Be sure someone at your school has the expertise to assist parents who want to add, change or remove numbers.** These requests should be handled at the school level as much as possible, but if assistance is needed, contact your public information officer. Try to encourage parents to have at least one number active for One Call Now so they can receive emergency notifications.
- **If your school experiences an emergency (lockdown/lockout, etc.), reach out to your public information officer for assistance in developing a message to communicate to parents.** Parents will want to hear your voice assuring them everything is under control and their child is safe, but it may be helpful to have a person who is removed from the crisis assist by writing the message for you to record.



Learn how **One Call Now** can work for your school district.

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About OnSolve One Call Now

OnSolve One Call Now, one of OnSolve's market-leading critical communications products, enables groups and organizations of all sizes and types to quickly, securely and reliably distribute critical information to large numbers of people on virtually any device and network. OnSolve sends over two billion notifications annually and has provided more than 60 years of proven support to both the public and private sectors. We deliver critical event management solutions that give our customers the ability to proactively keep everyone informed, instill confidence, foster teamwork, mitigate disruptions, improve operational outcomes, protect assets, and save lives.

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