

The Watauga County Board of Education recognizes the benefits of using an automated notification system to communicate valuable information to students, parents, and the community regarding emergencies and other school-related matters. The superintendent and his or her designees are authorized to use an automated notification system to send pre-recorded telephone voice messages and/or text messages to members of the school community in accordance with applicable law and this policy.

A. APPLICABILITY OF POLICY

This policy applies to the use of an automated notification system by school system employees to deliver a text or an artificial or pre-recorded voice message to a set of pre-programmed telephone numbers. For purposes of this policy, an automated notification system is any automated telephone dialing and/or text messaging system or service. The term “calls” in this policy includes both telephone calls and text messages.

B. AUTHORIZED USES OF THE AUTOMATED NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

School system employees may use an automated notification system to make calls for emergency or informational purposes. Any such call that uses an artificial or pre-recorded voice must state the name and phone number of the school system and/or the specific school that initiated the call.

1. Emergency Calls:

- a. An automated notification system may be used to call parents, guardians, or school personnel when the call is incident to a bona fide emergency potentially affecting the health and safety of students and/or school personnel, such as weather closures, fire, health risks, threats, and unexcused absences;
- b. An automated notification system may be used to call other members of the school community to make emergency public safety announcements when the announcements are relevant to the called party.

2. Informational Calls

Subject to the consent requirements set forth in Section D of this policy, an automated notification system may be used to make non-emergency calls when the calls are closely related to the school’s educational mission, such as to provide notification of official system-wide or school-specific events or activities (e.g.,

parent-teacher conferences, surveys on school-related issues, immunization reminders).

When permitted by law, school officials may use the automated notification system to satisfy parental notification requirements described in policy 4002, Parental Involvement. School officials shall use means other than the automated notification system to deliver the required notices to parents who have not given consent to receive non-emergency calls or who have revoked prior consent.

C. PROHIBITED USES OF THE AUTOMATED NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

1. An automated notification system may not be used for commercial advertisement or marketing, political campaigning or promotion. Before making automated calls for any other non-emergency purpose that is not closely related to the mission of the school or school system, school system employees shall obtain the express consent of the recipient to receive calls of that nature.
2. An automated notification system may not be used to make calls for any non-emergency purpose to an individual who has notified the school that he or she does not wish to receive such calls.

D. CONSENT AND REVOCATION OF CONSENT

1. Before using an automated notification system to make any non-emergency call, school system employees must have consent from the recipient to receive such calls. Consent will be deemed to have been provided in certain situations, as described in the next paragraph. Consent is not required for emergency calls.
2. By providing a wireless telephone contact number to the school system, parents, guardians, and students are deemed to consent to receive non-emergency calls at that number for purposes that are closely related to the school's educational mission and consistent with this policy, such as to provide notification of official system-wide or school-specific events or activities.
3. Individuals may revoke prior consent to receive non-emergency calls at any time. School officials shall honor revocation requests promptly.

E. MAINTAINING CONTACT INFORMATION

To minimize the risk of calling unintended recipients, the superintendent shall require principals and supervisors to update telephone contact information on a regular basis. Parents and guardians are encouraged to provide accurate contact information during registration and to keep their child's school informed of updated information when it

changes.

F. REQUESTS FOR REMOVAL FROM CALLING LISTS

All calls made using an automated notification system must include an automated voice-interactive or key-press activated opt-out method for the recipient to opt out of future non-emergency calls.

Legal References: 47 U.S.C. 227, 503; 47 C.F.R. 64.1200; In re: Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 Order on Reconsideration and Declaratory Ruling, CG Docket No. 02-278, FCC 22-100 (December 27, 2022), available at <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-22-100A1.pdf>; *In re: Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 Declaratory Ruling*, CG Docket No. 02-278, FCC 16-88 (Aug. 4, 2016), available at https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-88A1.pdf; *In re: Rules and Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 Declaratory Rule and Order*, CG Docket No. 02-278, WC Docket No. 07-135, FCC 15-72 (July 10, 2015), available at https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-15-72A1.pdf

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 4002), School Safety (policy 1510/4200/7270), Schools and the Community (policy 5000), Emergency Closings (policy 5050)

Adopted: December 11, 2017

Replaces: Board policy 5245, Use of Automated Messaging

Revised: June 19, 2023