SCHOOLMESSENGER®

SafeArrival for Families FAQ

What is SafeArrival?

SafeArrival is an absence management system that improves student safety and makes it easy for you to let the school know about your child's absence.

You are asked to report your child's absence in advance whenever possible using one of these convenient methods:

SchoolMessenger app (free)

1. Provide your email address to the school.
2. Get the app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store (or from the links at https://go.schoolmessenger.ca).
3. Tap **Sign Up** to create your account.
4. Select **Attendance** from the menu, and then select **Report an Absence.**

Web and Mobile Web: go.schoolmessenger.com

1. Provide your email address to the school.
2. Go to the website.
3. Click **Sign Up** to create your account.
4. Select **Attendance** from the menu, then select **Report an Absence**

Interactive Toll-free Phone

1. Call the toll-free, interactive telephone system.
2. Follow the instructions to report an absence.

Absences can be reported in advance:

- 24 hours/day
- 7 days a week
- For any school day in the school term
- Up to the cut-off time on the day of the absence.

Whenever an absence is reported or updated, you will receive a confirmation notice by email and/or text message (assuming you have provided your contact information to the school).

If you don't report your child's absence in advance, the automated notification system will try to contact you (using your communication preferences if you have set them up in the SchoolMessenger app). This may include push notifications to the app, email, SMS text messages, or phone calls. You will be asked to provide the reason for your child's absence immediately. You may do so using the phone line, website or mobile app.

If an elementary absence is not explained within approximately 20 minutes of the time that the school starts the notification process, school staff will follow up to make sure that your child is safe. If you try to explain an absence using SafeArrival but are then told that it is past the cut-off time, please contact the school directly.

There will not be a follow-up phone call for secondary students and their notification will occur, as it does now, in the evening of a day that had an absence.

If you don't want to receive notifications when your child is absent, be sure to report your child's absence in advance.

If you do receive notifications of your child's absence, be sure to provide the reason as quickly as possible, using one of the methods listed above or during the phone call notification itself.

Do I need a SchoolMessenger app account?

No, an account is not required to use SafeArrival, the new student absence management system at HWDSB. Families can use the toll-free phone number 1-844-506-4350 to report absences. Using this method does not require that you share an email address with your child's school.

However, creating an account will allow you to choose how you would like to receive absence notifications. Please note that creating an account will allow you access to additional features, including reviewing absences, contact information, communication preferences and more.

Please see related SchoolMessenger app documentation above for setting up your account, resetting your password, reviewing contact information, and specifying communication preferences. Once you have set up your account, choose ATTENDANCE from the menu.

If you cannot set up your account, you do not see the ATTENDANCE option, or you do not see your child(ren) listed in your account, please contact the school directly to check that your correct email address is associated with your child(ren).

Why does SafeArrival have information about my children?

SafeArrival is one component of a suite of products from West, the company that HWDSB also uses for its School Messenger automated phone calls. West is also a partner to PowerSchool, our student information system, which means that information required to operate School Messenger and Safe Arrival flows from PowerSchool. HWDSB has assessed West, regarding its relationship with PowerSchool, to ensure that its operations meet relevant security standards and privacy legislation in Ontario. The legal authorization to disclose the personal information HWDSB collects from parents/guardians to third party service providers such as PowerSchool and West comes from section 32(c-d) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) which provides that school boards can outsource when required to complete necessary, school-related functions.

How do I use the toll-free phone line?

When you call the toll-free phone line, follow the instructions for reporting an absence.

If the phone number you are calling from matches a phone number on file with the school for your student(s), you will hear your student'(s) name(s). If the system doesn't recognize your caller ID, you will be asked to enter the student's home phone number.

If you have difficulty using the toll-free phone line, please consider using the SchoolMessenger mobile app or website. Otherwise, contact the school directly.

What information does SafeArrival have about my children?

At the bare minimum, to function, SafeArrival requires:

- Home phone number provided to school
- Child's name
- Child's school
- Child's grade

When setting up an account, it would also need:

- Email provided to school

When booking an absence, it would collect:

- Name of child absent
- Type of absence (full day, late, etc.)
- Reason for absence
- Dates of absence

I missed a call about an absence and hit Reply to call back. Why does it go to HWDSB and not SafeArrival?

This error in the SafeArrival setup has been corrected by the provider and should no longer occur.

Why am I not receiving my email confirmation of a booked absence?

Please check with your school office administrator that we have your correct email address on file and that you have selected receiving emails in your SafeArrival profile.

When I try to book an absence, why is the date on the calendar wrong?

The provider has resolved this issue; the secondary portion of SafeArrival is now set up.

Who do we contact if there is a problem with our account? (e.g. missing child record, etc.)

Please contact your school office to ensure that the information for your child is correct.

What if the system says my email is not associated with a student?

Please contact your school office. They can ensure that the information for your child is correct.

When will I receive notification of an unexplained absence?

For elementary students, the SchoolMessenger Communicate automated notification system will contact parents whose elementary school child is absent when the absence was not reported in advance. This will occur 50 minutes after the school's bell time.

The automated notification system will attempt to contact parents/guardians multiple times until parents/guardians confirm and explain the absence. If this system cannot reach the designated contacts, elementary school office staff will follow up. If you try to explain an absence using SafeArrival, but are then told that it is past the cut-off time, please contact the school directly.

For secondary students, there will not be a follow-up phone call and notification of an unexplained absence will occur, as it does now, in the evening of a day that had an absence.

If you report your child's absence in advance using either the SafeArrival toll-free number, the website or the mobile app, you will NOT receive these notifications.

Who can I contact if I have a question or concern?

If you have a privacy concern about SafeArrival, please contact Sally Landon, HWDSB Privacy Officer, by phone at 905.527.5092 x2303 or by email at slandon@hwdsb.on.ca