



Villa Duchesne/Oak Hill School

801 South Spuede Road • St. Louis, Missouri 63131-2699

Telephone: 314.432.2021 • Fax: 314.432.0199 or 7713

Website: www.vdoh.org

November 29, 2006

Dear Parents,

In our efforts to improve communications between parents and school, Villa Duchesne/Oak Hill School is instituting a telephone broadcast system that will enable school personnel to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal, school cancellation or late start. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate general announcements or reminders. This service is provided by SchoolReach, which specializes in school-to-parent communications. We will continue to report school closings due to snow or weather on our web site and on KSDK, KMOX and KTRS. We will use this system in addition to the public announcements.

When used, the service will simultaneously call all listed phone numbers in our parent contact list and will deliver a recorded message. The service will deliver the message to both live answer and answering machines. "No answers" and "busy signals" will be automatically retried twice in 15 minute intervals after the initial call.

NOTE: 1) This requires NO registration by the parent on the SchoolReach web site. 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 Caller ID will display 314.432.2021, which is the main number for Villa Duchesne/Oak Hill School.
- **Live Answers:** There is a short pause at the beginning of the message, usually just a few seconds. Answer your phone as you normally would and hold for the message to begin. Multiple "Hellos" will delay the message. Please 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 maximum numbers of rings before hang up is five. To avoid missing the message, please make sure your machine is set to answer **before five rings**.

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- **Morning & Day Calls:** In the event a cancellation decision is made the night before or in the early morning hours, the broadcast message will be sent only to home and cell phone numbers. In the event a cancellation decision is made midday, the broadcast message will be sent to work numbers as well as home and cell. General announcements will be sent only to home and cell numbers.
- **Message Repeat:** At the end of the message you will be prompted to 'press one' to hear the message again. This is very effective when a child answers the phone and hands it to a parent, who can then replay the message in its entirety.

SchoolReach, the service provider, uses the best available technology in the industry to detect the difference between live answer and machine answer.

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 3 full seconds of silence before playing the message with a maximum wait time of 20 seconds.
5. If the system cannot make a determination, it will default to answering machine thus requiring three seconds of silence for the message to play. In this case, you may here 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. Cordless phone that has static or other foreign noise.
3. Not saying "Hello" or delaying saying "Hello."

What can be done to remedy this?

1. Do not say "Hello" more than once. If the system detected your answer incorrectly, any noise will reset the three-second counter.
2. If, after you answer, the message does not immediately play, you can cover the mouthpiece of the phone to cut out all background noise. The message should then play after three seconds.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Sciortino, Dr. Fagin or Mrs. Karl.

Sincerely,



Sam Sciortino
Head of School



Margaret Karl
Principal, Oak Hill



Patty Fagin
Principal, Villa Duchesne