From Term 3, West Wallsend High School will be introducing a new system that will send daily SMS notifications for unexplained student absences. If your child has been marked absent and the school has not already been notified of the reason for the absence, an SMS message will be sent to the parent/carer. The parent/carer can reply directly to the SMS to provide an explanation for the absence, preferably by 2pm on the day of the absence. When replying to the message, please include the student name, date of absence, reason for absence and name of person responding.

**Sample SMS reply message**

*Lisa Smith is sick 8/6/21*

*From Donna Smith*

For this service to operate effectively, parents/carers need to ensure their correct contact details are always up to date with the school.

To update your contact details, please email westwalls-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au

# Frequently asked questions

**Why is the school introducing the daily SMS notifications for absent students?**

The school is required to contact parents promptly, within two school days of an unexplained absence. Parents are required to provide an explanation for absence to the school within 7 days of the first day of any period of absence. The SMS notification will help to provide a timelier notification of the student absence and enable parents to easily respond to explain the absence.

**What time will the message be sent?**

The school will send the SMS notifications every day from 10.30am.

**Who will the message be sent to?**

The message will be sent to the primary contact mobile phone number we have on record.

**How do I reply?**

Reply to the message in the same way you reply to other text messages, by typing and sending your message. Please do not phone the number as it is an automated system rather than the school contact number. If you need to phone the school please use the following number (02) 4953 2111.

**What will it cost me?**

Standard SMS charges apply, depending on your mobile phone carrier and plan. The cost of an SMS is usually cheaper than a local telephone call.

**What if I believe my child is at school and I receive a message to say they are absent?**

Please politely reply to the SMS to inform us your child should be present at school. Include the child’s name and a brief statement such as *Lisa Smith should be present 12/5/21. Please check. From Donna Smith*. The office staff will follow this up and contact you with the outcome as soon as reasonably practical.

Please remember we endeavour to maintain accurate attendance records and appreciate your support and understanding whilst we introduce this new system.

**What are the justified reasons for a student absence?**

Parents of children from Kindergarten to Year 12 must ensure their children attend school every day. On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

* being sick or having an infectious disease
* having an unavoidable medical appointment
* being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
* exceptional or urgent family circumstances e.g. attending a funeral.

**How can I notify the school in advance if I know my child will be absent for a period of time?**

You will have access to the attendance section in the Parent Portal or App to notify the school of upcoming absences.

You can phone the school on (02) 4953 2111 or send an email to westwalls-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au

If you are planning a holiday or extended leave, students can collect an application form from the office and submit at least one week prior to ensure principal approval is gained beforehand.

Thank you for supporting our new absence notification system.

Please contact the School Attendance Officer, Sam Harris if you have any questions about the process.