

The Early Notification System

MAKING SURE OUR KIDS ARE SAFELY AT SCHOOL

"This is Smart School. Sam Jones is absent today. Please press 1 if you know he is absent; press 2 if he should be at school. You can call us on 09-968-3642."





“The fact that it is interwoven with our computer system is a big plus – there’s less paperwork than we would otherwise have to do.”

Dave Bagwell, Deputy Principal, Onehunga High School



THE WAY IT WORKS FOR SCHOOLS, STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS

- 8.30am** At Smart School Sam's teacher takes the roll. Sam's at school so he's marked as present on the attendance database. Meanwhile in the school office, the attendance officer, Jane is taking phone calls and messages from parents whose children are away from school that day. Jane updates the attendance database with this information, then pushes the button to start automatically notifying those parents whose children are absent without explanation. The system automatically combines the information on the attendance database with information from the contact database, and sends this via the internet to the centralised messaging server.
- 10.00am** At morning break Sam and his friend Lee decide to wag rather than go to maths, which is their next class. They head to Sam's house as he knows his parents won't be there.
- 10.30am** Sam's maths teacher marks Sam as absent on the attendance database.
- 10.40am** Jane pushes the button to start the notification process for the second time that day. This time, it starts to contact Sam's parents Mere and Leonard. Mere is sent an email at work, from Smart School: *"Sam Jones is absent today. Please confirm the reason for his absence, by replying to this email as follows: If you know the reason for this absence, please reply - Yes, Sam is...If you do not know the reason, please reply - No. You may also call us on 09-968-36427. Thank you."* But Mere's with a patient so she doesn't get the email.
- 10.45am** An email from Smart School is sent to Leonard at his work: *"Sam Jones is absent today. Please confirm the reason for his absence, by replying to this email as follows: If you know the reason for this absence, please reply - Yes, Sam is...If you do not know the reason, please reply - No. You may also call us on 09-968-36427. Thank you."* But Leonard's playing golf with a business partner so doesn't get the message.
- 10.50am** The telephone rings in Mere's consultation rooms but is diverted to the answer phone as she's busy with another patient. A message is left: *"This is Smart School. Sam Jones is absent today. Please call us on 09-968-3642."*
- 10.52am** The telephone rings at Leonard's office but as he's teeing off on the fourth hole, it goes unanswered.





10:53am

A text message is sent to Mere's mobile but now she's in a meeting with the practice manager so she doesn't get the message: *"This is Smart School. Sam Jones is absent today. If known, please reply Y to this message. If unexpected, reply N, or call 09-968-3642."*

10:58am

As Leonard waits for his golfing partner to tee off, his mobile beeps with a text message. He reads the message: *"This is Smart School. Sam Jones is absent today. If known, please reply Y to this message. If unexpected, reply N, or call 09-968-3642."*

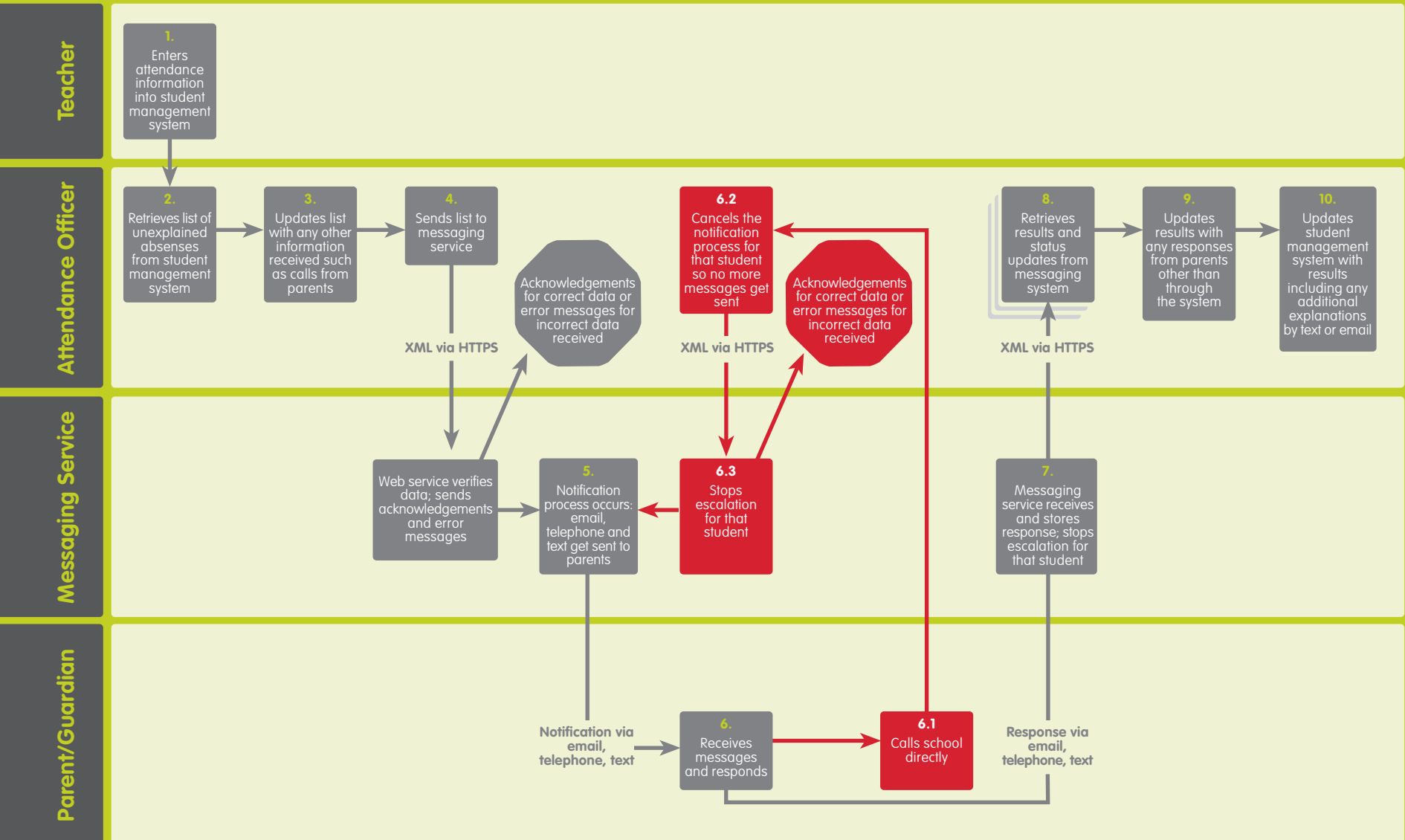
Leonard presses N then calls the school to find out what's going on. Jane tells him that Sam has been missing since 10.30am. He calls Mere – this time she answers her mobile. She has no idea where Sam could be.

Leonard hastily farewells his golfing partner, packs up his golf clubs, and rushes home to find Sam and Lee watching telly. He swiftly sends them off to school.

Meanwhile, Jane retrieves the latest results from the system. They show that Leonard has responded. She checks the status of the other notifications – whether they've been resolved, and the content of email and text messages received from parents. Satisfied that all the notifications have been completed she pushes a button to automatically transfer the results to the student management system.



> The process map





“The biggest plus is that it enables us to act more quickly. Under the old system we were relying on pupils bringing a note the next day, and if it was an unauthorised absence then we would start to try and get in touch with the parents. Now we will get a response from parents within an hour. It means we immediately know [if a student is truant] and can do something about it.”

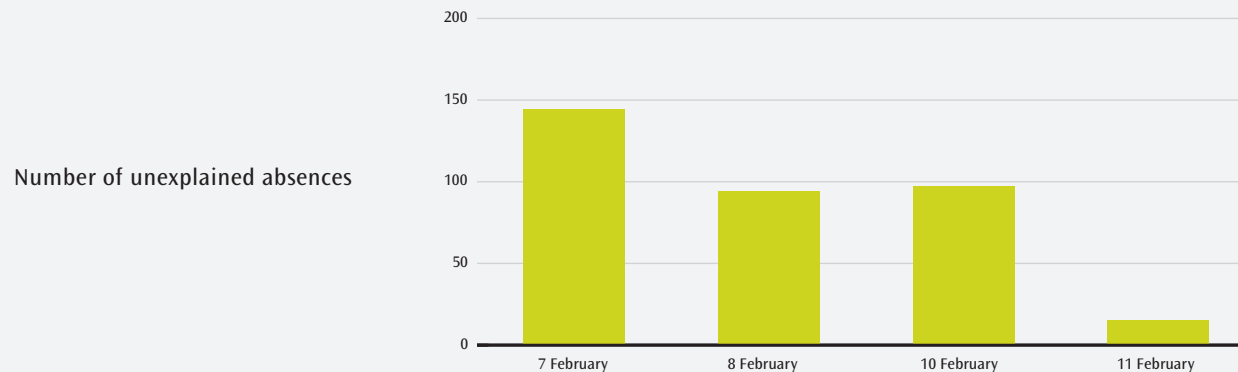
Dave Bagwell, Deputy Principal, Onehunga High School

> THE RESULTS

THE RESULTS ARE POSITIVE FOR SCHOOLS USING THE EARLY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

- Schools can contact parents more quickly helping them ensure children are safe.
- Schools have reported a definite and immediate drop in truancy when using the Early Notification System.
- Large schools can consistently follow up all absent students on the same day instead of weekly. Smaller schools have reduced the time they spend on contacting parents from up to two hours to less than 10 minutes a day.
- Schools have improved the quality and accuracy of their contact information and find it easy to maintain this information.
- Parents are able to follow up on their children's truancy straight away due to the timeliness with which schools alert them.
- Parents are more confident that they will be contacted if their children are absent without reason, and more proactive in advising schools when their children will be absent and why.

ONEHUNGA HIGH SCHOOL – FIRST WEEK USING THE EARLY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM





FIND OUT MORE

The Early Notification System's integration of a messaging service within the student management system drastically reduces the time it takes for schools to successfully contact parents. Plans are also underway to extend the service for more general messaging needs. For example, if a bus is late back from a field trip a message could instantly be sent to all affected parents.

To find out more, visit the data sharing services page at www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/sms or call the Ministry of Education, SMS Project Team on 04 463 7666.

"We've certainly noticed an increase in communications between home and school about children's attendance. Parents are a lot more vigilant in letting us know."

Chris Bryant, Principal, Brooklyn Primary School

"We found the system intuitive and surprisingly easy to learn. Within just a few days we were up and running."

Richard Harris, Deputy Principal, Tamaki College