

CASE STUDY



School: Bilton High School
Location: Billton, Warwickshire
Type: Secondary

It's Friday, and it has been a typical week at Bilton High School, a large 11-16 comprehensive school in Warwickshire. Typical but for the gentle falling of snow that seems to excite people in inverse proportion to their age...

We've been using Groupcall for around a year in a very integrated way. It plays a virtually seamless role across the school. Once our registers have been processed through the school office the system sends a message (text or voice) to the parents of all absent students – meeting the statutory duty of contacting parents on first day of absence and increasing the safety of our students. It can then move on to the task of chasing up unauthorised absences - freeing teaching staff to get on with other things, like teaching. Indeed there are plenty of students to teach as we have reached the highest levels of attendance - EVER!

Bilton High School – Unauthorised Absence Data			
2001 – 2002	79 Truants (0.81%)	3,500 unauthorised sessions	Manual Calling
2002 – 2003	147 Truants (0.95%)	4,731 unauthorised sessions	Manual Calling
2003 – 2004	57 Truants (0.5%)	2,120 unauthorised sessions	GROUPCALL

We have expanded our system beyond attendance. Our whole-school behaviour system brings to our attention any students whose behaviour has not met the expectations of the school and then Groupcall ensures it is brought to the attention of the parents, as are detentions and the like. Earlier, a Year Head popped her head round the door to say how she had used Groupcall for contacting all the parents of her recent Excellence assembly students and for confirming her key appointments with parents.

Mr Wragg, PE, had arrived on Wednesday, breathless (worryingly for a Head of Boys' PE) that the snow had meant the late cancellation of a football fixture and he had not had the time to put a note in the registers – Groupcall took to the task of sending thirteen instant messages. All players informed. Nobody left standing alone in the snow. The PE department love Groupcall – instant

www.groupcall.co.uk

© Copyright Groupcall Limited 2007. All rights reserved.

messages to parents about lack of kit and instant celebrations of events like the year 11s becoming Warwickshire County Football Champions!

Anyway as I said, it is Friday and therefore FAB FRIDAY! Staff across the week write up on the staffroom whiteboard students who have made great contributions to our school. Groupcall then sends a message home asking parents to congratulate their child for these contributions.

Groupcall will soon be able to flex its muscles by informing year 10 parents of the forthcoming Parents' Evening. It makes a real difference to attendance at these events. We get clear evidence that the message has got through and is not sitting at the bottom of a school bag. Better communication has presented us with more opportunities to communicate.

And finally, staff were this week excited at the prospect of receiving a message from the school via Groupcall. A click of a button (in school or over the net) could have seen us sending messages to inform staff that the school was closed due to snow. Thankfully (!) the snow melted and student excitement turned back towards learning rather than snowballs. Phew.

John Pinkney

Assistant Principal, Bilton High School