

Honeywell Instant Alert® for Schools Version 5.1.3 – Parental Interface

Frequently Asked Questions

- Alert Content -

Q: Exactly how many characters can be in the SMS message to be fully received?

A: Use (140) characters total for the Subject Line and SMS Message.

Q: How long can the voice and email messages be?

A: The complete message field can contain up to (2500) characters. This is the text that is sent to email addresses and is electronically converted into a voice message. If you use the recorded voice, the message length limit is five minutes.

Q: Does the voice translate from English to Spanish?

A: No, we have an English voice that reads English words and a Spanish voice that reads Spanish.

Q: How do parents receive a Spanish alert?

A: Groups do not need to be separated into English and Spanish groups. However, an English and a Spanish alert do need to be sent to the same group. Those parents who have selected to receive Spanish in their profile will be flagged and will receive the Spanish alert. Those parents who have selected the default English selection in their profile will receive the English alert. A second option is to have everyone default to English, and speak the alert in English and Spanish in the recorded message.

Q: Can I send an attachment to the email addresses?

A: Yes. You may attach .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .txt and .pdf files less than 5 MB in size. You can also include a website address in your email messages. If the alert recipient's email allows it, the address will appear as a hyper link in their email message.

Q: Sometimes I can save and send alerts that contain apostrophes and other times I cannot. What's wrong?

A: If you type your alert message directly into Instant Alert, the apostrophes will save and send correctly. However, if you use a different program to type your messages and then copy and paste them into Instant Alert, the apostrophes may not work depending on what program you are using. If you are using Word, the apostrophes from it will not work in Instant Alert. However, if you use Notepad or WordPad, these apostrophes will work in the Instant Alert message fields.

Q: What kinds of alerts are your other customers sending?

A: Our customers are using Instant Alert for many different scenarios. The most common ones are: weather delays and closings, bus delays, meeting and PTA notifications, student testing dates, attendance, discipline, missing assignments, picture days, concerts, sporting events and welcome back to school messages. The more you use Instant Alert, the more parents will become involved not only with Instant Alert itself, but with the school in general.

- Alert Sending and Receiving -

Q: The phone lines are down and the power is out. How do I send an alert?

A: Call our help desk at the number listed at the end of this document. Have your user name, password, and customer ID available as the staff members will ask you for this information. Tell them the alert message you would like to send and the groups to which the alert should be sent. They will create and send a new alert, or edit and send an existing alert for you as long as you supply them with the correct user name, password and customer ID.

Q: What if the power and phone lines go out while an alert is being sent?

A: If power is still available at the phone provider, the phone will "ring" and then get transferred to voice mail either instantly as if the customer was on the phone, or after a number of rings depending on how their voice mail is set up. If power is not available at the phone provider, the systems that take the voice mail would be down so the out bound phone call would most likely get either a "No Answer" or "Busy" or "Operator Intercept" message.

Q: What happens if the phone dialer encounters a busy signal?

A: Should a call reach a busy signal, the system will try the call a total of 3 times, waiting 5 minutes and then 10 minutes between calls. On non-answers, the system will try the call a total of 3 times, waiting 15 minutes between calls. If the call reaches a voicemail system or answering machine, it will leave a message.

Q: Can I get a report of completed calls after I send an alert?

A: Yes. This information may be found in the Alert Receipt Report under Alert History.

Q: Can I get a report of received emails after I send an alert?

A: No. Not all email systems have the ability to send receipt messages back to the sender. The Alert History Report shows the email addresses to which the alert was sent.

Q: How many e-mail and text messages can be sent per minute?

A: Our system is designed to send out 6,400 text messages per minute. However, receipt of the text messages is dependent on overall e-mail traffic and the receiver's text messaging system. Think of your e-mail system – some days we can get e-mail instantaneously, while other days it can take hours. At times cell phones receive text alerts immediately and at other times it takes a few minutes.

Q: How many voice messages can be sent per minute?

A: The Instant Alert system is currently designed with the potential to send 250,000 thirty-second phone calls in 15 minutes. Through our relationship with Varolii Corporation, the system is scalable to larger call volumes as customer volume grows. Calls are made in the order in which the phone numbers enter the calling queue from the database. Call delivery speed and percentage of successful deliveries can be affected by local phone company switching station capacity and inbound traffic at the time an alert is sent.

Q: In what order are the phone numbers dialed?

A: The numbers are dialed in the order they are put in queue – first in, first out.

Q: Can I change the preamble and caller ID for each school in my district?

A: You can change the preamble and caller ID for each school within a district as well as the district itself. The district administrator can do this under Configuration / Edit School District. The preamble will only be read if you are sending an electronic voice message. If you are sending a recorded voice message, be sure to introduce yourself and the school/district you are calling from.

Q: How do the email alerts get through spam blockers?

A: We have made arrangements with some email providers to allow our emails into their system without the spam designation. Email systems let the user create their own list of allowable email addresses. If an alert receiver is not receiving alerts on their email address, have them check their junk email folder and have them put instantalert@honeywell.com on their allowable email list.

Q: Can your calls get through telezappers?

A: Yes.

Q: I didn't receive a phone call.

A: Make sure that your profile is set up to receive the type of alert that was sent.

Q: When I answered the phone call, the voice started over. What's wrong?

A: The phone dialing system detected noise on your line, such as talking, coughing or typing. It assumed you were in a noisy area and you could not hear the message, so it started over for you.

Q: I didn't receive an e-mail.

A: Make sure that your profile is set up to receive the type of alert that was sent. Also make sure that the text address you entered is correct. Also be sure to check your junk email folder.

Q: Can we send alerts to international phone numbers?

A: No, Instant Alert is not capable of sending alerts to phone numbers outside of the United States. However, an international cell phone can receive text alert via cell text messaging.

Q: The electronic text-to-speech pronunciation of my school's name does not sound correct. How can I get this fixed?

A: Please contact your site Champion and Honeywell will get the proper pronunciation of your school name into the custom dictionary of our voice provider.

- Registration -

Q: I'm trying to register and I received an error that says "Invalid login details." What do I do?

A: This error means that you have chosen a login name that someone else has already chosen. Choose a more complex login name, such as a first and last name combination, or add a number to your name.

Q: Are there any restrictions to the user name and password?

A: User names need to be unique across the database. They are not case sensitive. Passwords are case sensitive and need to be between 7 and 17 characters long.

Q: How do my staff members register?

A: Staff members do not have to register if the school chose to have user IDs and passwords pre-assigned during the loading of your database. You may choose to give us user IDs and passwords for your staff members before the load so we can assign them an ID and password combination that they might be using for another application so that it is easier for them to remember. You may also choose to have the Instant Alert system randomly assign user IDs and passwords to the staff members. In either case, you will need to distribute this information to the staff members. Your third option is to have us load the staff members without any user ID and password information. In this case, the staff members would go to the Instant Alert home page and register themselves. If a person joins the staff after the initial Instant Alert load, first add them into the Profiles list via the School Administrator interface. Then the new staff member may register herself/himself.

- Parent Online Profile -

Q: How many phone numbers can a family have?

A: A family may receive alerts on an unlimited amount of phone numbers.

Q: How many text addresses can a family have?

A: A family may receive alerts on an unlimited amount of text devices.

Q: A parent has added a phone number to their profile. Why don't they appear in the "Mobile Phone" or "Work Phone" fields in the parent's Account Details in their online profile, or on the parent's profile in the school admin interface?

A: The parent added these numbers in their Alert Setup page instead of their My Family page. Therefore, the numbers are in the parent's profile and most likely are receiving alerts if they were set up properly, but they will not show up in the appropriate field in the administrative interface.