

February 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,



Banchory Academy

Schoolhill
Banchory
Kincardineshire AB31 5TQ
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www.banchoryacademy.co.uk
Rector: Judith Wight

School communications on your mobile phone

An exciting new service, Groupcall, is now available to us - making communication between the school and yourselves easier and more effective.

A free App – **Groupcall Xpressions** is available for you to download to your mobile phone or tablet. **Using the App will save the school the cost of a text by sending free messages. The more parents who sign up – the more the school will save when sending messages!** (We will continue to send texts to those who prefer this method)



We will also have the facility to send **emails direct to your inbox**, saving time locating the document on the school website – so **please ensure we have your current email address** (you will require an email address in order to register for the App – see para below re updating your records).

This free App will be used across all schools in Aberdeenshire (in time) and means that if you have children in various schools, all messages come to the same App.

Some of the benefits of the new Groupcall system to you are:

- The Xpressions App (info overleaf) allows you to receive messages on your tablet or mobile phone
- You can text in with notifications of absence before the school day starts
- When we send Absence Texts these can be responded to with the reason for your child's absence
- We can send Timed Messages later in the evening, meaning they will appear on your phone when you are with your child later in the day
- At the moment we can only send messages to the parent who is known as 'first contact', but in the near future, you can choose to have messages sent to additional contacts

Some of the benefits for the School are:

- Text messages delivered via the App are **free** – potentially saving the school hundreds of pounds each year.
- Emails can be sent to individuals/groups
- Survey responses can be collated quickly and easily

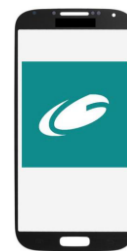
Note that in order to authenticate you when setting up the App, the contact details held by the school must match those that you register with - **if you get an error message when registering your details**, please contact the school via BanchoryAcademyContacts@aberdeenshire.gov.uk with the new details and we will update your child's records.

We have our own text number (07860 029020) – When you receive your first text from us, save the number in your phonebook so you will know who the text is from in the future. You may also need to check that the first email we send is not in your 'junk' folder.

We can send three different types of text messages:

Broadcast – with no reply option; **Open** – with the option to reply and **Closed** – you will have a specific reply option (e.g. for a school survey).

Getting in touch with us – We would advise that immediate or time-sensitive information should never be sent via the app or email. Please call the school on the usual number (01330 823357).



Groupcall Xpressions App

What happens if I haven't got the app?

Nothing will change. Sending messages via the app saves the school time and money but we will continue to send texts to those who prefer this method.

Will my personal details be safe?

Aberdeenshire Council is the Data Controller of the personal data being processed and GroupCall are our Data Processor. If you sign up, your data will be used to:

- Safely and securely log you into the Groupcall products;
- Correctly identify and display information about your children from their school(s);
- Provide assistance when requested by yourself or your school;
- Analyse and improve the services offered by Groupcall and provide you with the most user-friendly experience (There is an opt-out option available for this purpose on signing-up to GroupCall)

Can I have a say in what messages I receive and how I get them?

We definitely want to know your views on what communications you would like to receive from the school, how often and at what time of day. Please help us by completing the online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/AberdeenshireSchools>

Once installed and set up, the app offers a range of benefits including:

- Messages from the school delivered directly to the app
- Urgent text messages duplicated into the app
- Even if your children attend schools in different authorities, all messages can be received through the app
- Ability to reply to selected messages and complete satisfaction surveys via the app
- From early 2017 (date TBA) messages can be sent to more than one contact if required

To start receiving messages via the app:

- Visit your phone/tablet's apps store to download the *Groupcall Xpressions* app and follow set up guidance at <http://parents.groupcall.com/setup/>