



Institutional Text Messaging Policy for Student Communications

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 2026

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of text messaging to communicate with students in a manner that:

- Supports timely and effective communication;
- Protects student privacy;
- Ensures compliance with applicable laws, carrier requirements, and institutional standards; and,
- Provides clear consent and opt-out mechanisms.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All employees authorized to send text messages on behalf of the institution; and,
- All students who may receive institutional text communications.

III. CATEGORIES OF TEXT MESSAGING

The institution utilizes text messaging for two distinct purposes:

A. Emergency and Safety Messaging

Emergency text messages are used to communicate urgent information necessary to protect the health and safety of the campus community.

Examples include:

- Campus closures;
- Weather-related emergencies; and,
- Active threats or safety incidents.

Students are automatically enrolled in emergency and safety messaging as part of the institution's critical notification system. These messages are limited to urgent situations and are not used for general communications.

B. Operational and Informational Messaging

Operational text messages are used to communicate important, time-sensitive information related to a student's experience.

Examples include:

- Registration and advising reminders;
- Financial aid notifications; and,
- Academic and administrative updates.

Students will receive these messages only after providing appropriate consent, in accordance with applicable regulations and institutional practices.

IV. CONSENT AND OPT-IN REQUIREMENTS

Students must provide clear and affirmative consent to receive operational and informational text messages. Consent may be obtained through:

- Student information system preferences; and,
- Enrollment or onboarding forms.

Consent disclosures will include:

- A description of the types of messages students will receive;
- A statement that message frequency may vary;
- Notice that message and data rates may apply;
- Instructions for opting out and obtaining assistance; and,
- Reference to the institution's Privacy Policy and Terms of Service.

V. REQUIRED MESSAGE CONTENT

All text messages must:

- Clearly identify the sender (e.g., Presbyterian College or a specific office);
- Provide concise and relevant information; and,
- Include opt-out instructions (e.g., "Reply STOP to opt out").

Where applicable, messages must also include a "message and data rates may apply" disclosure and contact information for assistance.

VI. OPT-OUT AND SUPPORT

Students may opt out of non-emergency messages at any time by:

- Replying STOP to any message; or,
- Contacting the designated institutional office.

Students may request assistance by replying HELP or contacting support.

Opt-out requests will be processed promptly (within five business days).

Emergency communications may not be subject to opt-out where required for campus safety.

VII. MESSAGE APPROVAL AND GOVERNANCE

All messages will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate office to ensure accuracy and clarity, compliance with FERPA and other institutional policies, and alignment with institutional communication standards.

VIII. PROHIBITED USES

Text messaging may not be used to transmit:

1. Social or informal event invitations unrelated to institutional operations;
2. Grades or academic records;
3. Passwords or authentication credentials;
4. Social security numbers, passport information, or other sensitive personal data; or,
5. Driver's license numbers or other protected identifiers.

IX. MESSAGE FREQUENCY

Message frequency will vary depending on student engagement, institutional needs, and the nature of communications.

X. RETENTION AND REMOVAL

Students who graduate or withdraw will be removed from operational messaging lists within a reasonable timeframe. Consent records will be maintained in accordance with institutional data retention policies.