SENTRAL
A division of globalpayments

Admin Guide
Messaging

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Introduction

The Messaging module is where you set up Sentral to send messages to your parent community. It is designed for two types of messages:

- general
- attendance.

Use this document to set up Messaging for:

- SMS
- Email
- Portal.

> ***Note:*** *We have described the setup process for schools with a dedicated number and those without.*

Disclaimer

This document is a guide only, and Sentral accepts no liability for your configuration of the software.

Product versions

Your school will have one of the products listed in the Feature availability table below – with the main difference being the Classic versus Indigo user interface.

Differences exist between product versions, and between states due to curriculum differences. These differences are described at a feature level in this guide.

Feature availability

	Sentral Classic (ST)	Sentral Cloud (ST)	Sentral Enterprise (MT)	Sentral ONE (S1)
Messaging	■	■	■	■

Permissions

Overview

Administration of this module is usually assigned to a select group of staff with access to all the functionality in the module, especially if money is involved in the purchase of credits.

Your school is responsible for applying access levels for staff that determines the actions they can perform in the module.

There are two main scenarios:

- Your school is new to Sentral
- Your school already uses Sentral, and existing access levels are in place.

New Sentral customer

Use your Global Admin account to apply Messaging Admin permissions to selected staff. If required, configure the access levels further to control the actions they can perform in the module.

For details, refer to the following guides in the Help Centre:

- Admin Guide – Induction for New School

- Admin Guide – Setup
- Admin Guide – Getting Started with Sentral.

Existing Sentral customer

Check the configuration already in place. It may not be out-of-the-box.

For details, refer to the following guides in the Help Centre:

- Admin Guide – Induction for New School
- Admin Guide – Setup
- Admin Guide – Getting Started with Sentral.

Access

To access Messaging from the Sentral home screen:

Select the menu icon ( ) and choose Messaging.

Select Setup and choose Messaging Setup.

Considerations

Dedicated mobile number

Action

Determine if a dedicated mobile number suits your school's situation.

Reason

As a Sentral school, you can request access to the SMS portion of messaging by requesting a Top Up on the school account.

With a dedicated number, your parents and caregivers can save the number to their mobile phones and use it to send inbound messages, as well as reply to absences and general SMS messages. It allows two-way communication.

Without a dedicated mobile number, your school can only receive absence replies. This is because mobile numbers are randomly populated each time a message is sent. Your parents and caregivers cannot save a number and reuse it.

SMS message replies are automatically tagged back to their original message. By default, Sentral only automatically links SMS replies for a specified time after the message is sent – although you can alter the default time.

Note: *For more information about SMS messages, refer to the Messaging User Guide – SMS message length section.*

Video: *Watch this short promo on our YouTube channel.*

Sentral SMS messaging streamlines school communication

Data synchronisation

Action

Manage data synchronisation. This is updated at 5am daily but you can choose to do a manual override.

Select Setup and choose Data Synchronisation.

Reason

Student information is correct, roll classes and teacher allocations are up to date.

For the Messaging module to operate, you must have roll classes with students in them. Parent and caregiver details must be up to date and synced across.

Action

Link staff details to their data layer source (EBS4, Eduhub, Edsas, Cases, Enrolments).

Select Setup, select Manage User Accounts, and then choose Edit. In User Details, use the search box at the find the staff member in your school's administration system, and then select Save.

Reason

For the Messaging module to operate, you must have user accounts created for staff members at the school.

SMS and email templates

Action

Decide how absence notifications will be sent:

- automatically via a set of customised rules within the Messaging module
- personally via staff member contact with parents.

Reason

Automation reduces the manual work required and completes this task in a timely manner.

It relies on roll marking being completed efficiently by all staff.

Action

If your school is planning to use automated messaging for sending out SMS and emails for student absences, then configure SMS and email templates in the Communication module.

See Communication Admin Guide in the Help Centre

Automatic absence notifications

Action

Define the rules for when automatic SMS/email absence notifications are run in the Attendance module.

See Attendance Admin Guide in the Help Centre

Reason

This is critical in most schools to communicate with parents when an exception is triggered in the Attendance system. For example, Unexplained Absence. This rule can be applied in Attendance, Health (sick bay) and PxP modules.

Configure general settings

Overview

Use the information in this section to configure general messaging settings that you must set up in advance.

> ***Video:*** *Watch this demo on our YouTube channel to learn about General settings.*
>
> *Messaging Setup | General settings*

This screen has user interface differences between product versions. These differences are summarised in the Feature availability table below.

Feature availability

	Sentral Classic (ST)	Sentral Cloud (ST)	Sentral Enterprise (MT)	Sentral ONE (S1)
Automated Return Email Name / Return Email Name			■ Label is Automated Return Email Name	■ Label is Return Email Name
Use Only Mobile Field			■	■
Phone Number Order			■	■
Preferred Contacts Selection Sequence			■	■
Automatically Selected Preferred Contacts Sequence			■	■
Preferred contacts priority (Primary Family)	■	■		
Preferred contacts priority (Non-Residential Family)	■	■		
Allow other additional contacts to be set as a preferred contact			■	■
Address Book uses First Name Type			■	■

1. Select the menu icon (⠿) and choose Messaging. Select ⚙ Setup and choose Messaging Setup.
2. Select Settings in the left menu and choose General Settings.
3. Review the on-screen explanations for each setting and decide the configuration that suits your school's needs.
4. Under Messaging Settings, specify settings to suit your school's situation:
   a. (MT, S1 versions) Specify the name shown in the From field for an email.
   b. Return Email Address

Better practice: Set this to the school email address to ensure that all school related emails are handled via the school inbox.

> ***Tip*** *Teachers who send an email can opt to have the responses returned to them whilst they're composing the email.*

c. (ST version) **Phone Number Import**

Select which number to use as the contact number. This field controls the sequence/preference for phone contact. To automatically use the first phone number that starts with an '04xx' prefix, select Automatic.

> ***Warning:*** *If you're at a NSW Department of Education (DoE) school using ERN, consider the way these fields map to ERN.*

d. (MT, S1 versions) **Use Only Mobile Field** and **Phone number Order**

   i. Select whether you want work and home phone numbers used if no mobile number is found in the mobile field.

   ii. Use the drag handles to specify the order in which contact numbers are used.

   NSW DoE schools – see the warning above.

e. (ST version) **Preferred contacts priority (Primary Family)** and **Preferred contacts priority (Non-Residential Family)**

   i. Specify the order to use when sending a message to a contact in a student's family.

   You can override this option on a per student basis in the student contact details screen.

   ii. Specify the order to use when sending a message to a non-residential contact for a student's family.

> ***Note:*** *Used only when the primary family contacts don't have details against members.*

f. (MT, S1 versions) **Preferred contacts Selection Sequence** and **Automatically Selected Preferred contacts Sequence**

   i. Specify the order used to determine the contact preference.

   ii. Specify the number sequence used.

   Example

   Parent 1 has a sequence of 1.

   Parent 2 has a sequence of 2.

   Emergency Contact 1 has a sequence of 1.

   Emergency Contact 2 has a sequence of 2.

   Once imported Parent 1 and 2 would have the same sequence and Emergency Contact 1 and 2 will have a sequence of 3 and 4 respectively.

g. Default Absence Notification Subject

Specify the subject you want to set in outgoing absence notifications.

h. Default Absence Message Priority

Better practice: Set this to both SMS/Email.

i. Specify whether to allow emergency contact to be set as a preferred contact.

j. Specify whether to allow student contacts to be set as a preferred contact.

k. (MT, S1 versions) Specify whether to allow other additional contacts to be set as a preferred contact.

l. Specify whether to allow the ability to send read receipts for emails.

m. Email template absence variable only return date – select Yes or No.

n. Display Portal Message Feed

   Specify whether to push absences notifications the Parent Portal.

o. (MT, S1 versions) Specify whether the address book displays a contact's stored first name or preferred name.

p. Set the signature used for all emails that go out to student contacts.

> ***Tip:*** *Use the work processing tools to create your signature.*

5. Select Save.

Configure SMS settings

Overview

Use the information in this section to configure how the Messaging modules handles responses to messages sent out.

SMS message replies can be automatically tagged back to the original message. This can cause problems with some smart phones as they will continue to attach new messages as replies to previously received messages. To avoid this, Sentral by default will only automatically link SMS replies for a specified time period after the message is sent. You can adjust the default time to suit your typical parent response times.

> ***Video:*** *Watch this demo on our YouTube channel to learn about SMS settings.*
>
> *Messaging Setup | SMS settings*

> ***Tip:*** *You can change the status of inbound messages between 'Response' and 'Not a Response' when viewing Messaging | Outbound Messages | View Messages and Messaging | Received Messages.*

1. Select the menu icon (⠿) and choose Messaging. Select ⚙ Setup and choose Messaging Setup.
2. Select Settings in the left menu and choose SMS Settings.
3. Specify the time frame for recognising replies to SMS messages.
4. Select Save.

Configure custom user rights

Use the information in this section to configure user access rights that your staff have for sending emails and SMS messages. There are two steps – the first is to define sending rights for each access level. The second is to You can do this two ways – either by permissions level or per user.

Feature availability

	Sentral Classic (ST)	Sentral Cloud (ST)	Sentral Enterprise (MT)	Sentral ONE (S1)
Settings			■	

1. Select the menu icon (⠿) and choose Messaging. Select ⚙ Setup and choose Messaging Setup.
2. Select Settings in the left menu and choose Custom User Rights.
3. Under Access Level Control:
   a. Review the access levels.
   b. Select checkboxes next to each access level to specify default sending rights for email and SMS. Users will default to the rights that you define here.
   c. Select Save.
4. Under User Control:
   a. Review the default rights assigned to each user.
   b. To assign custom rights for per user:
      i. Select the checkbox in the Custom Rights column.
      ii. Select or deselect whether they can send email or SMS messages.
      iii. Select Save.

> ⚠ ***Warning:*** *You cannot revoke sending rights for Global Administrators. You cannot give sending rights to users with No Access.*

Configure from email configuration

Use the information in this section to add email addresses that your users can select as the 'From Email' when they're sending emails via the Send SMS & Email functionality in the Messaging module.

> ℹ ***Note:*** *You can restrict usage to certain users, groups of users or users belong to a certain role.*

Feature availability

	Sentral Classic (ST)	Sentral Cloud (ST)	Sentral Enterprise (MT)	Sentral ONE (S1)
From Email Configuration menu option			■	

1. Select the menu icon (⠿) and choose Messaging. Select ⚙ Setup and choose Messaging Setup.
2. Select Settings in the left menu and choose From Email Configuration.
3. To add a new email address:
   a. Select Add new email address.
   b. Enter details for the From name and From email address.
   c. Select Save.
4. To assign access to the email:
   a. Select Assign access next to the email listed under From Email Configuration.
   b. In Assign Access:
   c. Specify whether to restrict users.
   d. Do any of the following:
      i. Select an option from the Groups list.
      ii. Select an option from the Roles list.
      iii. Start typing a user's name and select from the options display.
      iv. Selected groups, roles, and users are listed.
   e. Select Save.
   f. To delete an email:
      i. Select Delete next to the email.
      ii. Select Confirm.
5. To edit an email:
      i. Select Edit next to the email listed under From Email Configuration.
      ii. Update the details for the From Name or From Email.
      iii. Select Save.

Appendix A: Summary checklist

So, you have reviewed the detailed document and are wondering what's next? Use the table below as a quick reference guide to get your Messaging module up and running in no time.

Checklist

	Checklist	Review frequency
Dedicated Mobile Number	Will you need a specific school mobile phone number for two-way communications?	One off purchase
Is Data up to date?	Is the data up to date with accurate email address, mobile phone number?	All the time
Display Portal Message Feed	Will Absences be pushed through to Portal	On an annual basis – January
Automatic Absence Notifications	Is the school going to Use Automatic Absence Notifications? Y/N If Yes, determine rules for this.	On an annual basis – January
Preferred Contact ordering	What is the ordering preference for contact of this student?	On a regular basis