

# Ways To Use BrightArrow's Emergency Hotline Features

BrightArrow's Emergency Hotline, or Panic Button, allows you to easily send an alert quickly to either: (1) Some of your staff, (2) All of your staff, or (3) parents and staff. Here we describe many of the ways this feature can be adapted into your organization.

## **Panic Button for Staff-to-Staff Emergency Alerts.**

BrightArrow's Panic Button lets you initiate the alert via App, Text-in and Dial-in. As schools started deploying the feature, many found that the easiest option given the wide spectrum of technical skills of their staff and faculty is to simply allow them to text to a predefined phone number, which in turn distributes the emergency information according to rules you have defined.

We include an app for those with app-savvy folks, but for most staff and faculty we provide you a dedicated phone number that your employees add to their mobile phones "Favorites." Upon an emergency event, they text the associated keyword with any accompanying detail, and the system takes the appropriate action. Usually most staff only need a couple of keywords in their repertoire – and if they text without a keyword (or with an invalid one) it immediately responds back with the list of valid keywords.

## **Why is texting a keyword a more reliable approach over an app (even though we provide both)?**

- **Security** – With texting the phone's Caller ID determines the validity of the sender. No login information that has to be remembered and can be hacked by trouble-causing students.
- **The Easiest Technology** – Apps are wonderful, but they require installation, updating, and enough phone memory and resources to run reliably. Everybody can text.
- **Connection Reliability** – If the emergency occurs in a location that has poor wireless or WIFI connections, texts tend to be more reliable than apps because they need minimal connectivity to send.
- **Basically, It's Using #Hashtags** – A popular communication technique is #Hashtags. Compared to learning to navigate an app interface, texting with hashtags is easy. And if you forget the hashtag keyword, it will text back the choices.
- **Simplicity Minimizes the Stress** – If your app is not running right, or other apps have used up your phone's memory, or you forget your login, or a bad connection, or, or ... the increased stress level can lead to mistakes. The simplicity of texting a keyword lets you focus on the actual emergency instead of the communication tool.

## **Panic Button for Staff-to-Parent Emergency Alerts.**

The Panic Button feature can be setup in many ways. You can have keywords for all staff to use (like #shooter or #fire) and other keywords for only authorized administrators (#allparents, #allstaff, #evacuation, #lockdown). You define in advance who is authorized to launch each alert, and who receives the alert. The lists of those receiving or authorized to send the alerts can be synchronized with your SIS or HR database so it is always up-to-date.

For example, maybe a staff member uses a keyword to notify emergency staff of a serious situation (maybe they text "#intruder in the playground"). The Principal or authorized administrator can then subsequently text a keyword that goes to all staff and parents, "#Lockdown Parents, In lockdown as police investigate an intruder. Children are safe. More information soon. Principal Holmes."

## **Different Levels for Different Staff Members.**

You can vary, by user, which keywords are available, and who receives the messages upon each keyword. For example, maybe all staff/faculty can use #fire and #shooter, but only certain administrators to use a wider variety of keywords, like #lockdown or #evacuation. In fact, the user with the broader set of choices may opt to instead use the BrightArrow Target Mobile app as those same keywords would then appear as choices in the app eliminating the need for them to text keywords at all.

## **Expanding the Emergency Alert Subsystem for Weather Cancellations and Other Urgent but Non-emergency Announcements.**

This feature is much broader in scope than just the above safety examples. You can set up keywords for weather delays or cancellations. You can text a keyword, use the app, or use the web page – these features are interchangeable.

## **Using the Emergency Hotline for Student Absence Reasons from Parents.**

The emergency hotline allows responses, which can be very useful when you need a text back or call back with and answer. For example, it can text or call parents with absent students and the reply text or voice message can arrive into your email inbox.

## **BrightArrow's Panic Button and Emergency Hotlines can be adapted into your Safety Plan.**

Organizations have different safety plans. The BrightArrow alert mechanisms are so simple, inexpensive, and easy to configure that it does not have to replace other items in your plan. It can be your primary internal alert system, or your backup mechanism. It can fill in gaps in your plan or become the main communication component in your Safety Plan.

These were just a few examples of how this functionality can be used in your organization. There are many more, and we would be glad to discuss your needs and requirements to help you brainstorm on how this functionality can apply to your operation.



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