



## iSchools incorporate SMS functionality into its online management and financial control systems to help schools reach Government targets

### Introduction

iSchools is a company that provides online management and financial control Systems to Independent schools and colleges in the UK.

The company's software is modular in design and provides schools with a comprehensive range of services including timetabling, registration and financial management facilities. It is based on the latest Microsoft products and includes a centralised database for managing pupil, staff and supplier information.

### Background

Teachers are increasingly under pressure to keep parents and carers regularly informed of their pupils' academic progress as well as well as the school's calendar of events without compromising teaching standards.

In addition The Government has stipulated that by the end of 2012, all schools and colleges will be required to communicate with parents electronically.

Email, however, is not necessarily the most effective way of communicating routine messages to parents and carers. In order to add value to its existing system and to offer greater flexibility to schools with regards to communications methods, iSchools has recently integrated the toText.net online SMS gateway into its overall online management system.

### The solution

In order to make the SMS module completely transparent to system users, toText.net has developed a bespoke interface that connects the iSchools system directly to its SMS gateway.

This means that teacher and administration staff can create and send messages directly from the iSchools system, which they are already familiar with.

To send a text message users log into the iSchools system as normal via a password-protected interface. They open the message dialogue box, write their message and select a relevant distribution list, the whole school, a particular year group or all, boys in year 7, for example, and press the "send" button.

The toText.net interface then forwards all messages to its centralised servers where mobile numbers are verified and the messages are converted into appropriate SMS formats for delivery.

Teachers and administration staff can quickly see how many messages they have sent and, more importantly, when messages were delivered, using the toText.net easy to use system management software.

The online SMS service is currently being piloted by 5 schools including Gemini College in Milton Keynes and Hopelands Prep School in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire.

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*" If head teachers need to contact parents, child minders or nannies urgently to inform them that school will be closed due to adverse weather conditions, for example, SMS is the quickest and most effective way to do this"*

**Robert Owen**  
iSchools Ltd.

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### About email to SMS

Email to SMS allows you to send and receive text messages from any email application to any mobile phone.

It integrates with your email address book, so you can easily send single or multiple messages to pre-defined contact lists and receive all replies in an email format.

In addition you can manage all your messages from a single centralized point.

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