



**Effortless education
engagements
every day**



CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Customer:

Our Lady Star of the Sea
School

Business Issues:

Wasting time and money
printing and sorting
notices, and the phones
getting jammed with
parents ringing about event
cancellation inquiries

Solution:

Efficient electronic notices
and parent-teacher
communication

Outcome:

More time for admin staff
& teachers, lower printing
costs, less stressful when
organising parent-teacher
interviews and events.

Customer:

The Catholic primary school, Our Lady Star of the Sea, is situated in Howick, Auckland and is a place of learning for approximately 600 pupils. Staffed by 29 full-time teachers, it prides itself on offering education with a special character.

Business issues: Staff wasting time and money with inefficient communication methods

Like many school office teams, printing off a week's worth of 500+ newsletters, notices and permission slips was never a task that the Star of the Sea administration staff looked forward to. "Photocopying newsletters was timely and a huge cost", confesses the school's Executive Officer, Sue Yandell. However, photocopying was only the beginning of the school's paper notice nightmare.

When parent-teacher conference time rolled around, following up on students bringing back their filled in time request form was no easy task. "All the staff had to sit around a big spreadsheet trying to work out how to fit children in", says Sue. The vast amount of paper used and the time-consuming organisation behind events such as parent-teacher interviews and school trips was inefficient for all parties involved – teachers, administration staff, students and parents.

Informing parents of cancellations and postponements for events like cross-country was another key communication issue for the school. Sue describes how if there was a chance of rain on a day with a school event, parents would ring the school for updates as there was no procedure in place to notify parents of such events. "This jammed all the phone lines and took up the staff's time", says Sue. Communication and organisation for such occasions at the school always seemed more complicated than it should have been.



Solution: School-links provides the solution with timely and cost-effective communication tools

For a school like Star of the Sea, that needed to engage with parents daily, School-links was the obvious answer to its communication inefficiency.

They first encountered School-links at a principal's conference and were able to investigate the company further when School-links Executive Directors, Andrew and Robyn Balfour, visited the school. After they gave a talk on the benefits of using the specialised communication tools, Sue was convinced it was the solution to the school's communication problems.

"We were initially attracted to the electronic newsletters and text alert features School-links offered", says Sue. However, over the years the school's School-links package has grown to include many more time-saving communication features. Sue says that "along with the electronic newsletters and text alerts, we also use School-links for daily reminders and notices; parents e-mailing their child's absence notifications; electronic parent-teacher interview bookings; and emergency staff and parent alerts."

Outcome: School functions efficiently with School-links daily communications with parents

Paper newsletters and notices became a 'relic of the past' with the school's adoption of School-links e-mail news feature. "Parents now get timely newsletters and choose when and where to access them", says Sue. Printing costs have gone down and staff no longer waste time with photocopying and distribution.

If the parents also benefit from the School-links online parent-teacher booking system. It allows parents to see what time slots are available and book their interview at a time that suits them. This process also takes a lot of stress away from the teachers involved. Sue has a lot of praise for the parent-teacher conference system. "For parent conferences School-links has been amazingly good. It's been a lot more efficient than our old way of doing things", she says.

Another communication solution that School-links has provided the school with is the text and e-mail alert system. Now, if an event is postponed or cancelled, staff can send out an instantaneous message to all parents affected. Sue says that people now wait for an event update message to be sent out via School-links rather than everyone ringing the school for information. This has reduced the pressure put on office staff and lessened the parents frustration of not knowing what is happening.

School-links has become an essential tool in the day-to-day running of Our Lady Star of the Sea school and made communication with parents instantaneous, easy and efficient.

"For parent conferences School-links has been amazingly good – it's been a lot more efficient."

Sue Yandell
Executive Officer, Our Lady Star
of the Sea School.

About School-links

School-links is a New Zealand-owned software product that provides affordable communication tools for education providers, from early childhood centres through to tertiary institutions. We are recognised by the Ministry of Education as an official provider for early notification services, and integrate with the mainstream student management systems. We offer extensive training and local helpdesk support.