

Audience

All members of the Villa Maria College community, including prospective and current students.

Statement

SMS text messaging is an efficient and effective way of communicating with current and future members of the College community. Villa Maria College will only distribute text messages to users who opt-in to receive our text messages while providing the ability to opt out at any point by changing their communication options related to SMS text messaging. Those who opt out will be marked as such and will not receive text messages until they opt back in.

Background

Text messaging can be a highly effective means of communication, but the College is also aware of the need to protect user's data and limit what information may be sent through a text. As an institution, Villa Maria will follow all guidelines for FERPA, The Privacy Act of 1974 and the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. No information in violation of these laws may be sent via text. The College will not share any information via SMS text-messaging apps with any 3rd parties without allowing users to opt-out before sharing. The College must protect user data to ensure a positive communication experience.

Guidelines and Procedures

All current (new and returning) students are automatically opted in upon class registration at the start of each semester. Please note: If a student does not want to receive text messages, they can reply to a text message with STOP. These guidelines and procedures must be followed by each department / office responsible for sending SMS text communications).

All prospective students are automatically opted-in when submitting an application for admission to the College. (Please note: If a student does not want to receive text messages, they can reply to a text message with STOP. These guidelines and procedures must be followed by each department / office responsible for sending SMS text communications).

There are currently five different text-messaging categories:

1. Financial Aid: Current students and individuals who have been granted admission to the College may receive text messages regarding financial aid packages, FAFSA deadlines, submitted and/or missing documents, scholarships, work study, and more.
2. Student Accounts: Current and incoming students may receive text messages regarding billing, including deposits, tuition, fees, and more.
3. Business Office: Current and incoming students may receive text messages regarding outstanding balances, hold statuses, and more.
4. Student Life: Current students may receive text messages regarding student affairs, campus programming, and more.
5. Communications: Current students may receive text messages regarding general, non-emergency campus-wide updates. For more information about emergency communications, please email communications@villa.edu
6. Student Success Center: Current students may receive text messages regarding academic advisement, course registration, and more.
7. Library: Current students and graduates may receive text messages regarding the distribution or return of textbooks and course supplies, and more.

User Privacy:

Due to privacy laws, such as FERPA, certain information may not be able to be discussed via text messages, (such as grades, GPA, etc.). If the conversation evolves to the need to discuss sensitive information, the student may be asked to check their email account or schedule an in-person meeting with the office/person best suited to assist.

Email remains the official form of communication

Text messaging will be utilized to enhance communication. Messages email account is and will remain the official form of College communications. Students should check their Villa-issued email account regularly for official and important College communications.

Frequency of SMS text communications

Participating departments will send an average of one to two text messages per month. During key times, such as registration, text messages may be sent more often.

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