

Parents can choose from one of four pre-set SMS replies programmed, providing an excuse for the child's absence or stating they are unaware of the child's whereabouts. Teachers will obtain a summary of the day's attendance once the system has received a parent's replies. The idea is to cut down response time for the teachers and for the parents... not to cause more stress for the student.

Close to 400 13-year old students will test the system initially but they plan to have 1,400-strong school fully wired before the end of the year. About 70 percent of parents have mobile phones.

The system cost about \$2,760 US dollars. Mobile phone text messaging, introduced to the city-state in 1995, has become an extremely popular means of communication with users punching out millions of messages everyday.

Read the following statements and put 'A' if you agree, 'D' if you disagree or 'NS' if you are not sure.

1. Children in Singapore can play truant twice before teachers can SMS their parents.
2. This system automatically alerts both the head teacher and the parent.
3. The new system will decrease the amount of administrative work for the teachers.
4. SMS means 'Short Message Sender'.
5. There are four pre-set replies.
6. The SMS service is a new service in Singapore.
7. The idea behind this new service is to cause stress to the students.
8. By next year, 1,400 schools will have this new SMS service in place.

Vocabulary:

Look at the list of words below and match one word from Column A with a word that can go together with it from Column B. These are called 'collocations' (Example: Play truant)

Column A	Column B
play	student
cause	time
mobile	popular
electronic	truant
provide	database
extremely	stress
response	phone
absent	an excuse

Writing:

Think about the following question and write no more than 250 words.

Children learn much more from the Internet than from teachers in schools. The government should therefore close all the schools so those children can study at home where they are safe from playing truant.

Answers

play truant provide an excuse
 cause stress extremely popular
 mobile phone response time
 electronic database absent student