



**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT**

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**CIRCULAR NO. 9 OF 2022**

**TO: DDGs  
CHIEF DIRECTORS  
DIRECTORS HEAD OFFICE AND DISTRICTS  
CMS HEADS  
CIRCUIT MANAGERS  
ALL STAFF**

**FROM: A/DIR- COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT**

**DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATION POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The communications and Events Directorate initiated a process of developing a Communications and Media Policy for the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE). This is to ensure that guidance to all the different units within the sector regarding how communications should be handled, both internally amongst the ECDoE officials and with external stakeholders or partners is provided.

The main objectives of the Communication Policy are to:

- Ensure that communications across the Department of Education is well co-ordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.
- To provide the public, stakeholders and the media with complete, accurate, clear and timely information about the Department's policies, services and initiatives.
- Ensure that the Department is visible, accessible and accountable to the public it serves.
- Identify and address communication needs for both internal and external publics of the Department in order to enable the exchange of information by delivering prompt responses to requests for information.
- Guide officials of the Department in their dealings with the media and the Department's stakeholders.

It must be noted that the department communication policy is applicable to all officials of the Department, from Senior Management to line function staff members up to school level.



## 2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The following are the legal prescripts that have been taken into consideration when drafting the policy:

- The South African Constitution of 1996 (Supreme Law)
- National Language Policy Framework
- White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service (Batho Pele White Paper)
- Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (PAIA)
- Public Service Act of 1994
- Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (PFMA)
- Disciplinary Code and Procedure for the Public Service (PSCBC Resolution 2 of 1999)
- Copyright Act, 1978
- Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002 (Act no. 25 of 2002)
- Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act no. 36 of 2005)
- Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS)
- Government Communication Policy – 2018
- Integrated Provincial Communication Strategy Framework, 2019 – 2024

## 3. MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AND MEDIA RELATIONS

The Communications Directorate is responsible for all media enquiries, guided by the office of the HoD and that of the MEC. All media campaigns or strategies should be done in consultation with the office of the MEC, if such require ministerial participation as well as responses to media enquiries that could have implications for the MEC.

Media representatives will continue to play their role in the democratic process by providing the public with news and information about government and reporting on the public's views and opinions of government. The department must therefore cultivate proactive relations with the media to promote public awareness of government policies, programs, services and initiatives.

## 4. DEPARTMENTAL SPOKEPERSONS

The MEC, as the political head of the department serves as government appointed spokesperson of the department with the support of the Head of Department. The Head of Communications is also one of the designated spokespersons for the Department and should be accessible to media representatives and provide them with accurate information.

It should be noted that the media will usually first approach the Directorate: Communications and Events Management. It is then the responsibility of this unit to organize for relevant managers to speak to the media.

However, in cases where the media first approaches other officials, it is the responsibility of those officials to approach Communications about the media enquiry. Such individuals must seek permission from the Head of Department or the Head of Communications for approval before responding to the media.





Officials designated to speak on the Department's behalf, including line functions or subject-matter experts, must approach the Communications Directorate for advice to ensure that the requirements of the Department and this policy are met. It is important that information from the Department of Education comes from one source so as to avoid conflicting statements from reaching the media and therefore **all responses from line function managers should be channelled through the Director: Communications and Events Management, so that the Department can speak in one voice.**

## **5. MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENTAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

As part of its broader Communications and Media Policy, the Department has developed social media Policy in recognition of the growing popularity of the use of social media in its operations and by its staff, clients, stakeholders and partners. The purpose is to regulate the use of the ECDoE's social media channels and to inform all users of social media platforms of their roles, responsibilities and obligations. The Communications Directorate has an overall responsibility for effective operation of the policy. Commonly used social media tools include but not limited to Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, weblogs, forums and discussion boards and Wikis.

It is the responsibility of the Communications Directorate to manage the content on the department's social media accounts to ensure consistency of messaging and to avoid confusion and miscommunication. The Head of Communications must ensure that everyone operates the department's social media accounts safely, appropriately and in line with the department's policies and objectives. Only people who have been authorised to use the department's social networking accounts may do so.

New social media accounts in the Department's name must not be created unless approved by the Director: Communications and Events Management. The Department operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focuses on the most-appropriate social networks. If there is a need for opening a new account, employees should raise this with the Directorate: Communications and Events Management.

The department's social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or to take part in any activities that could bring it into disrepute. When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, employees should always review the content thoroughly.

It should be noted that all staff are responsible for their own compliance of the social media policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. Staff members have a responsibility of reading and understanding the policy and any breach, should be reported to the Director: Communications.





## 6. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

The Department permits the incidental use of social media platforms for personal use subject to certain conditions set out below. However, this is a privilege and not a right. It must neither be abused nor over-used and management reserves the right to withdraw this permission at any time at its entire discretion. The following conditions must be met for personal use: -

- (a) use must be minimal and take place substantially out of normal working hours (that is, during lunch hours, before 8 am or after 4.30 pm) unless communications through social media forms part of performing your duties for the Department or complements and/or support your role in the Department. Even then, it should be used in moderation. Social media should not affect the ability of employees to perform their regular duties.
- (b) use must not interfere with business or office commitments.
- (c) use must comply with all the other general policies of the Department.

## 7. GENERAL RULES FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- i) Always write in the first person, identify who you are and what your role is, and use the following disclaimer "*The views expressed are my own and don't reflect the views of my employer*". Employees should ensure it is clear that their social media account does not represent the Department's views or opinions.
- ii) Do not upload, post, forward or post a link to any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory, defamatory or inappropriate content. Inappropriate content includes pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs. This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Director: Communications and Events Management Directorate and team.
- iii) Never disclose commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information.
- iv) Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent. If staff wish to share content published on another website, they are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.



- v) Be honest and open but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of us as the Department. If you make a mistake in a contribution, be prompt in admitting and correcting it.
- vi) You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools – be aware that what you publish will be in the public for a long period of time.
- vii) Do not discuss colleagues, clients of the department, service providers, stakeholders and partners without their prior approval.
- viii) Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory, e.g. politics, religion or criticism.
- ix) If you notice any content posted on social media about the Department (whether complementary or critical) please report it to the Communications and Events Management Directorate team.
- x) Look out for security threats. Staff members should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are also used to distribute spam and malware.
- xi) Employees should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of the department without checking that it can deliver on the promises. Direct any enquiries to the Communications and Events Management Directorate team.
- xii) Manage complex queries via other channels. Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and client issues. Once a client or stakeholder of the department has made contact, employees should manage further communications via the most appropriate channel — usually email or telephone.
- xiii) All employees should respect the corporate identity of department and government as a whole. If you are unsure about the use of the National Coat of Arms or Provincial Coat of Arms, please consult with the Director: Communications or with the Government Communication and Information Systems.
- xiv) Only the authorised spokesperson or duly delegated manager may provide comment to the media on government-related issues. If an employee is approached by the media about posts on an official government or any social media site, she/he must refer such to the designated government or departmental spokesperson.



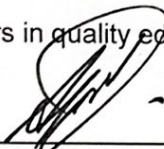


## 8. ENFORCEMENT AND CONSEQUENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE

It should also be noted that certain conduct may be regarded as misconduct in terms of the provisions of the relevant Disciplinary Code and Procedure of the Department, and that it may also constitute a criminal offence, making such person(s) subject to an investigation, subsequent disciplinary, civil and/or criminal action or contractual termination(s) in which case the Department may involve the police or other law enforcement agencies in relation to breaches of the policy.

The contents of the circular must be brought to the attention of all employees of the ECDoE.

Yours in quality education.

  
Mr M.D. Qwase  
Head of Department (Acting)  
Date 10.11.2022