



LORETO CONVENT SCHOOL

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

This Policy is subject to the Loreto Convent School Code of Conduct, School Rules, Staff Handbook, SACE Code of Professional Ethics and the disciplinary procedures contained therein. Any transgressions of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance to these documents and will be recognized as a major offense for the purposes of disciplinary procedures that will be followed.

1. DEFINITIONS

The following words and terms bear the meanings assigned to them as follows:

“access” means the right, opportunity or means of funding, or retrieving information;

“banned content” means any criminal or defamatory content, or any other content that includes, but is not limited to:

- speech that discriminates against any person based on (but not limited to) gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, and so forth;
- explicit and (or) pornographic imaged or content of any type, including suggestive content relating to a minor;
- content that may be considered to be graphic, violent or otherwise offensive;
- defamatory content;
- content that may be considered to be harassing or threatening and could cause a person to suffer physical, mental or emotional harm;
- any content that may bring the School's name into disrepute or harm the dignity or reputation of the school in any manner;
- any content that discloses personal information about the broader School community, including learners, parents, staff or alumni, without their explicit consent in writing;
- any content that may be used for unlawful purposes or have as their aim, to assist or encourage unlawful conduct;
- intellectual property that is not owned by the School and (or) may be subject to copyright held by another party;
- any content that is untrue or fraudulent.

“child” means a person under the age of 18 years;

“criminal content” means any content which may be subject to the definition of a crime as set out in the Criminal Procedure Act, as well as other legislation applicable to this policy;

“crimen injuria” also termed defamation, means the crime under South African common law, defined as the act of unlawfully, intentionally and seriously impairing the dignity of another;

“cyberbullying” means wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other digital devices;

“defamatory content” means any statement or image that is published which has the effect of injuring a juristic or natural person's reputation and good standing, as well as lowering their estimation with right-thinking members of society;

“publish” means to create and (or) disseminate or perform any action to distribute in any way, content on social media. This includes and is not limited to actions associated with 're-

tweeting', 'sharing', 'liking' or being 'tagged' in content distributed on social media, as well as content that is found on any instant messaging group, regardless of the author of the content. An item may be considered to be published, once it has been sent from one person to at least one other person, whether it is viewed or not.

“social media” means a collection of interactive online platforms and tools that individuals, groups and organisations use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media. It allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Live.ly, Music.ly, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, WeChat, WhatsApp and other instant messaging platforms, gaming platforms and any other forms of communication that may now or in the future be generally regarded as social media;

“social networking site” means a web-based service that allows individualsto:

- (a) build a public or semi-public profile;
- (b) share contacts or friends with other users; and
- (c) view their lists of contacts or friends and those made by others withinthe system;
the nature and nomenclature of these contacts or friendsmay vary from site to site;

“staff” means any person employed in any temporary or permanent, part-time or full-time by the School, including educators, support staff, sport coaches and other persons so employed.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is compiled in accordance with, and subject to, the following legislation and amendments:

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996)

Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998

Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995

Labour Relations Amendment Act 6 of 2014

Electronic Communications Act 36 of 2005

Films and Publications Act 65 of 1996

Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011

Criminal Procedure Act 51 of 1977

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007

Copyright Act 98 of 1978

Children's Act 38 of 2005

Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-Related Information Act 70 of 2002

Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013

Guidelines on e-Safety in Schools, Department of Basic Education, 2010

SACE Code of Professional Ethics

3. PURPOSE

This policy seeks to:

- (a) Regulate the use of social media and social networking at Loreto Convent School, 135 Nana Sita Street, Pretoria.
- (b) Offer learners the opportunities that multimedia learning can provide in a responsible and respectful manner in order to enrich the teaching and learning environment in our School.
- (c) Outline the responsibilities and behaviour expected of employees, learners and their parents, as users of social media and social networking, in particular, that:
 - (i) all members of the Loreto Convent School community and representatives of the School should take responsibility for the content written, recorded, displayed, posted or communicated online;
 - (ii) they should exercise good judgment and common sense at all times when contemplating any of the listed activities in sub- paragraph (i);
 - (iii) participation on social media and social networking sites may result in the violation of school rules and the Code of Conduct, or be in contravention of existing laws; and
 - (iv) the use or participation in these platforms should not negatively affect the name or impact on the reputation of the School.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, learners and their parents at Loreto Convent School.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social media and social networking are used generally to:

- (a) participate in online communication in order to share an interest and
- (b) gain or share knowledge;
- (c) share music, art videos, opinions, collaborate on work or discussions and learn from one another;
- (d) socialise by keeping in touch with existing friends and finding new ones, and to channel the promotion of a cause or product;
- (e) allow users to link up with each other quickly and effectively, especially in a professional environment;
- (f) further professional or personal goals through users communicating their opinions, values and experiences;
- (g) market and promote certain services or ideas; and
- (h) assist in lifelong learning and create communities of practice.

6. ASPECTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN OUR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Employees, learners and their parents at Loreto Convent School must give due consideration to the following when using social media and social networking sites:

- (a) As with all online communication tools, the social media environment has to be managed so that it does not become all consuming.
- (b) Cognisance must be taken of copyright law when sharing media and that modifying any work, comment or posting without permission of the author can affect the reputation of the author and other parties. Permission should be obtained at all times.
- (c) Privacy and circumspection apply as any communication forwarded to others and/or placed in the public domain must give credit to the source.
- (d) Social media networks are often visible to people from the user's professional as well as personal life. This blurring of social and professional lines can result in embarrassing or otherwise inappropriate revelations, for instance when educators and learners, invite or connect on social media, they must be aware that aspects of their profile are visible to other learners and employees.
- (e) Users should familiarise themselves with privacy settings and avoid sharing information they may not wish to be in the public domain.
- (f) Users should avoid or take care not to share compromising images or inappropriate messages that may damage their reputation later on in life, particularly pertaining to banned content.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES WITH REGARD TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

7.1 THE SCHOOL

The school must formally put in place a policy on the use of social media in order to:

- (a) sensitise learners and employees to the appropriate etiquette for each online environment; educate learners on critical thinking skills and digital literacy, to enable them to navigate safely through the online world;
- (b) guide learners to understand the need to select the most suitable communication tools for their educational and social experiences;
- (c) ensure that learners are aware of the potential negative effects of Internet use;
- (d) teach learners in an age-appropriate manner about the risks and dangers involved in the use of social media, particularly when some of the risks and dangers occur both in the home and school context (i.e. cyberbullying);
- (e) encourage learners to act responsibly and be aware of the consequences associated with the use of social media;

- (f) specify when and for what purpose the use of social media platforms are acceptable;
- (g) ensure that online activities planned by educators only include age- appropriate sites;
- (h) guide learners to take responsibility and report inappropriate behaviour, or acts that may negatively affect the school and their fellow learners;
- (i) advise learners and employees of behaviour that may be inconsistent with the Code of Conduct for learners and sanctions that may be imposed if found guilty of misconduct or serious misconduct in terms of the code and of transgressions of applicable legislation in the case of employees;
- (j) outline a procedure for incidents which may have a potential for criminal accountability;
- (k) accommodate incidents with child protection dimensions;
- (l) inform learners and employees about the policy and ensure that the policy is made visible throughout the school; and
- (m) make this policy available to every parent, educator and learner.

7.2 THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE

- (a) A social media committee within the Loreto Convent School must be enacted, to manage compliance with this policy and assist in matters pertaining to social media use by the School as and when it is required.
- (b) The team may comprise of:
 - (i) a member of the school management team (SMT);
 - (ii) the teacher(s) appointed to manage the various social media platforms;
 - (iii) an IT educator or other knowledgeable person;
 - (iv) another educator, school psychologist or social worker;
 - (v) a representative from the governing body;
 - (vi) at least one member of the representative council of learners; and / or
 - (vii) any other appropriate persons, where practicable.
- (c) The main responsibility of the team will be to develop, implement and enforce an acceptable social media policy, underpinned by the Code of Conduct for learners and employees at Loreto Convent School, and to ensure that:
 - (i) all role players at Loreto Convent School are made aware of the content of the policy and the consequences likely to flow from non- compliance;
 - (ii) parents are encouraged to take reasonable steps to ensure that learners comply with the policy within and outside school premises; and
 - (iii) all stakeholders are informed of the types of incidents which may potentially attract sanctions and possible criminal accountability.

7.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEARNER

Learners must be taught to:

- (a) keep in mind the global scope of social media and qualify or limit their posts appropriately;
- (b) be cordial, honest, fair, thorough and transparent when using social media;
- (c) remember that although the use of social media may be easy, informal, fast and inexpensive, these electronic messages are also permanent, transferable records that can affect the reputation of the School and wider community;
- (d) obtain permission for the use of third-party or employee intellectual property rights, including copyright, patents, trademarks and videos;
- (e) know that it is prohibited by law and (or) policy to:
 - (i) become involved in identity theft;
 - (ii) participate in age restricted, hate or cult websites;
 - (iii) buy or sell stolen goods on websites;
 - (iv) divulge personal information or disclose confidential financial information regarding bank and credit cards by using unsecured bogus sites; and
 - (v) publish compromising information which may harm another individual's reputation or dignity; it is also regarded as harassment to do something that they know could cause harm to another person, whether mental, psychological, or physical harm;
 - (vi) publish any content that is considered banned as per this policy.

7.4 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EMPLOYEE

- (a) The employee must never have online communication on a one-on-one basis with a learner, but always in a group context, for education purposes and for information sharing.
- (b) The employee must never invite or follow learners on social media, except on those sites which have been designed specifically for professional purposes in a group setting.

7.5 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EDUCATOR

The educator must:

- (a) guide learners to understand that what is permissible in a classroom, is acceptable online; and anything that is impermissible in a classroom, is also unacceptable online;
- (b) be aware that online activities may impact on their personal reputation, image and ability to interact with colleagues and learners;
- (c) be professional and courteous when interacting with others online;
- (d) respect the needs for discretion and confidentiality with regard to personal information, and other sensitive information that may not be appropriate for public discussion;
- (e) endeavour, within the bounds of reason, to remain neutral, objective and

professional on issues presented and discussed by educational platforms or sites intended for educational purposes; and

(f) judiciously remove any material deemed offensive, inappropriate, off- topic, discourteous or otherwise annoying to other users.

8. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

(a) Loreto Convent School recognises the rights of all persons to freedom of expression, however, the School also has an obligation to protect the reputation and private information of the School, its learners and parents as well as that of staff.

(b) Social media groups and other public or communication platforms must only be established for a particular purpose, and once established, may not be used for any other purpose.

(c) No person may use the School social media and other electronic platforms for advertising purposes without the express written consent of the Board of Governors.

(d) Any images or recordings of a learner, staff or parent that is obtained with or without their permission, must be removed from the public domain at their request. Parents must inform the School in writing, should they wish to remove consent for the publication of any media of their children on a public platform.

(e) Any person who is aware of any misconduct or improper use relating to social media or other electronic or public platforms, must report this to the Executive Principal or member of the Social Media Committee.

(f) Every user of a social media platform must strictly adhere to the terms and conditions of their use.

(g) Copyright law must at all times be observed. Any intellectual property that is used by another author must be acknowledged. Modifying and subsequent use of such property without the permission of the author is prohibited.

(h) Any complaint regarding the School or its wider community must be aired using the correct channels, and must not be aired on social media.

(i) Parents are expected to monitor their children's use of social media, communication platforms and other public platforms, and must at all times support the School in the responsible and safe use of these.

(j) Staff must ensure that all interaction on electronic and social media platforms to which learners or parents have access to, remains professional. Staff members may not have current learners as 'friends' on social media platforms.

(k) Care should be taken at all times not to publish personal information on public platforms.

(l) Any person who retweets, shares, likes, forwards or tags any content or comment, is liable for it under law and is recognised as being in the chain of publication.

(m) No person may use the logo of the School or any other identifying symbols without the express written consent of the Executive Principal.

(n) No person may create an account on a public platform, social media or communication platforms that purports to belong to the School without the express written consent of the Executive Principal.

(o) Abuse of any public platform, social media or communication platform may incur criminal charges, and persons defamed have the right to seek legal recourse.

(p) Any account that is set up for the purposes of communications or on social media, must be monitored by a designated person such as a teacher, Prefect or sport coach, as applies.

9. NON-COMPLIANCE

Non-compliance by learners and employees is considered a major offence and will be dealt with guidance from the School's Code of Conduct, the SACE Code of Professional Ethics for Educators and the Staff Handbook.

10. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

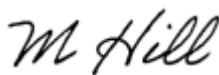
DATE 11/09/2023



Chairperson: Board of Governors



Executive Principal



Deputy Principal Primary School



Deputy Principal High School

