



SUNLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

1. Definitions:

The following words and terms bear the same meaning as assigned to them in the Guidelines for Social Media and Social Networking:

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

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

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

“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; and

“social networking” means a web-based service that allows individuals to:

- (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 within the system; the nature and nomenclature of these contacts or friends may vary from site to site.

2. Legal framework

This policy is, among others, underpinned by:

Constitution of the Republic of South African, 1996

United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child, 1989

South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)

Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998)

Western Cape Provincial School Education Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997)

Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act 36 of 2005)

Films and Publications Act, 1996 (Act 65 of 1996)

Protection from Harassment Act, 2011 (Act 17 of 2011)

Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977)

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

Copyright Act, 1978 (Act 98 of 1978)

Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005)

Regulation of Interception or Communications and Provision of Communication-Related Information Act, 2002 (Act 70 of 2002)

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

3. Purpose:

The policy has been instituted to protect learners, parents and staff of Sunlands Primary School, as well as the good name of the school and promote to the responsible use of all social media platforms and networks.

This policy seeks to:

- (a) Regulate the use of social media and social networking at Sunlands Primary School.
- (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 learners and their parents, as users of social media and social networking, in particular, that:
 - (i) all members of the Sunlands Primary 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 activities related to social media;
 - (iii) participation on social media and social networking sites may result in the violation of school rules and the learners' Code of Conduct, or be in infringement of existing laws; and
 - (iv) the use or participation in these sites should not negatively affect the name or impact on the reputation of the school.

4. Scope:

This policy applies to all learners and their parents at Sunlands Primary School.

This policy provides guidance for learners and their parents as to the use of social media - which is defined as a web-based service that allows individuals to:

- (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 within the system; the nature and nomenclature of these contacts or friends may vary from site to site
- d) use the service to create, publish and/or share digital content

Examples of social media sites include, but are not limited to, "Facebook", "Tiktok", "Whatsapp", "Instagram", "Telegram".

Responsibilities with regard to social media and social networking:

Responsibility of the Learner:

Learners should be aware that any conduct, even in their private capacity, which impacts on the interests of the School, must be in accordance with the School's rules and policies. A learner may face disciplinary action should their actions on social media be found to be in violation of the code of conduct. This is applicable whether or not the action occurs during school hours or on school grounds.

Learners in particular 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 these media and that modifying any work, comment or posting without permission of the author and/or other parties involved 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 could cause embarrassment or inappropriate revelations – particularly at an age where self - image is vulnerable.

(d) Learners should familiarise themselves with privacy settings and avoid sharing information they may not wish to be in the public domain.

(e) Learners should avoid or take care not to share compromising images or inappropriate messages that may damage their reputation later on in life.

(f) know that it is against the law to:

(i) become involved in identity theft;

(ii) participate in 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.

Responsibility of the Parents:

Parents need to recognise their role in ensuring the responsible use of social media. They are to ensure that children are educated as to social media platforms.

Sunlands Primary School requests the parents model good social media practices and to this end

(a) do not posting defamatory 'statuses' about fellow parents, pupils, the school or its employees, but rather follow the grievance policy as indicated;

(b) avoid modelling behaviour that minimizes or demeans the importance of social media etiquette and laws;

(c) partner with the school to resolve any matters that may arise as a result of incorrect social media use;

Should the name of the school not be referenced, it is highly recommended that in so far as possible, parents address matters that arise on social media directly amongst themselves – with as much sensitivity as the matter requires- particularly if the incidences

: are isolated in nature

: involve minor cases of swearing, use or distribution of crude images and/or audio

: involve a conversation/disagreement between existing friends/friendship groups

We request that parents contact the school should:

- (a) a matter arise on social media that may have an impact on the good name of the school;
- (b) a matter arises on social media that may impact the holistic well being of a learner at the school

Responsibility of the School:

According to the Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-related Information Act 70 of 2002, “any person ... may intercept any communication if he or she is a party to the communication, unless such communication is intercepted by such person for purposes of committing an offence”. As such, the school may therefore intercept any communication that is conveyed through the school’s information systems or social media platforms and that refers to any information regarding the school.

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

- (a) sensitise learners 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) insert an addendum for signature by each parent, educator and learner.

Consequences to Non Compliance

Non-compliance by learners must be dealt with through the school's Code of Conduct for learners.

