

## 1. Policy Statement

To ensure clarity of use and guidance for staff, pupils and all users regarding the use of social media and networking applications.

This policy is designed to protect individual members of staff, pupils and all users, and respects the privacy of all users of the school information system, however, this privacy does not extend to their work-related conduct or to the use of the equipment, resources or supplies provided by the school.

The purpose of this policy is to govern the use of the school's information systems in conveying any communication-related information, and the appropriate use of social media platforms by educators, non-educators and learners. The school recognises the evolution of social media as a mode of communication, but also realises that to optimise the use of social media, it must be used responsibly.

Anyone setting up a social media account that is directly connected to Lawson Brown High School (using the name of the school, its official logo, or who is clearly attached to Lawson Brown High School in some way) must follow all the guidelines in this policy.

All staff and pupils and non-educators must read, understand and sign the Online Safety and ICT Acceptable Use of Policy.

## 2. Rationale

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new, relevant and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with duties to the School, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

The School use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff and pupils at the school.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Safeguard all pupils and promote wellbeing;
- Ensure users are not exposed to risk as a result of their actions; • Use social media in a respectful, positive and productive way which respects all parties involved;

- Ensure that the reputation of Lawson Brown High School (the School), its staff and governors is protected and that stakeholders understand their ambassadorial role with regard to the School;
- Protect the School from legal risks;
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the School.

In terms of 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”.<sup>1</sup> 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.

### **3. Definitions and Scope**

The School defines social media as ‘any websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking’. Social networking sites and tools include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, LinkedIn, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube and Instagram. It also includes forums and discussion boards such as Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups, online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, and any other web sites which allow individual users or organisations to use simple publishing tools.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

All members of the School should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. They must also operate in line with the School’s Equalities, Harassment, Child Protection, Safer Recruitment and Online Safety and ICT Acceptable Use policies.

### **4. School-sanctioned use of social media and/or social media accounts using the name of Lawson Brown High School, a Lawson Brown School logo, or clearly attached to Lawson Brown School in some way**

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum, and to support student learning and to share news with the wider Lawson Brown School community. Internet access shall be granted to employees and learners who have a legitimate

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<sup>1</sup> Section 4(1).

need for such access, for which the user needs to formally apply. All internet connections shall be via the approved internet service provider of the school.

There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop pupils' learning and to keep the Lawson Brown High School Community and our supporters in touch with the School, (for example whatsapp groups with parents and the D2 app.....)

When using school social media accounts and/or social media accounts using the name of Lawson Brown High School, a Lawson Brown High School logo, or clearly attached to Lawson Brown High School in some way, the following practices must be observed:

Internet use is a privilege, which constitutes the acceptance of responsibilities and obligations that are subject to government policies and laws. Acceptable use must be legal, ethical and respectful of intellectual property, ownership of data, systems security mechanisms and individual rights to privacy and freedom from intimidation, harassment and annoyance and should be entirely professional and should reflect well on the School.

Users shall be subject to limitations on their internet use, as determined by the appropriate supervising authority. (i.e. the SMT and SGB and relevant network provider and parental apps.)

To protect the school from profane material and to minimise the use of bandwidth, all internet use shall be monitored by web content filtering software.

Content filtering software shall prevent users from connecting to certain websites that do not relate to school business. All websites that contain sexually explicit, profane and other potentially offensive material shall be blocked via the proxy server.

Staff must not publish photographs of pupils without the written consent of parents / carers, or the pupil themselves if they are deemed of the age and ability to provide their own consent. Standard practice is to publish only the first name and initial of surname, unless permission has been given by parents or pupils (if deemed of the age and ability to provide their own consent) for the full name to be used. School sanctioned social media sites must use images of children in suitable clothing.

Staff must take into account the Safeguarding (Child Protection and Staff Behaviour) Policy when making any posts on school social media accounts.

Any inappropriate comments on, or abuse of, school-sanctioned social media and/or social media accounts using the name of Lawson Brown High School, a Lawson Brown High School logo, or clearly attached to Lawson Brown High School in some way, should immediately be removed and reported to the principle, HOD or

**responsible teacher/adult.** It is the responsibility of everyone using the site and social media in general to report abuse immediately.

## **5. Use of social media in practice for staff, learners, non-educators - for personal and professional use**

5.1 Staff must not have 1:1 communication, including direct messaging (DM), with pupils through any social media, apart from via school email accounts, Google Meet hangouts via a school account and school mobile devices for text messaging. 1:1 communication via Google Meet as part of the Schools Online Learning, must follow the School's Online Learning: Policy and Procedures for Teaching Staff.

5.2. Staff should not request or accept any current student of the School of any age or any ex-student of the School under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account unless they are the parent of the pupil or a close family member.

5.3. It is advisable that staff do not have contact with past pupils (above school age). Staff may remain in communication with past pupils via a school email account or the School social media accounts.

5.4. Any communication received from current pupils on any personal social media sites must be reported immediately to the DSL and to the E-Safety Officer.

5.5. If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any student in any social media, these must immediately be reported to the Principle, SMT or any responsible teacher or adult and to the **E-Safety Officer.**

5.6. Members of staff must ensure that, wherever possible, and where the social media site allows, their privacy settings on social media sites are set so that pupils cannot access information relating to their personal lives or follow them on their personal accounts

5.7. All email communication between staff and pupils of the School on school business must be made from an official school email account (any deviation from this in an emergency must at once be reported to the line manager). Staff should not use personal email accounts or personal mobile phones to make contact with pupils of the School, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances such as school trips or away matches that have been given prior approval by the HOD's. Prior approval may also be given staff to

communicate professionally with pupils on School premises for safety reasons.

5.8. Staff or pupils or non-educators or parents should not post or publish on the internet or on any social networking site, any reference to the School, their colleagues, parents or pupils or discuss pupils or colleagues or criticise the School or staff. Staff, pupils, parents and non-educators may like, share or make appropriate comment in response to the School's official social media accounts, in accordance with Section 4.

5.9. Staff must not post images on any unofficial Lawson Brown High School social media account that includes pupils, unless sharing posts made from a School official social media account.

5.10 Pupils and parents may not make or disseminate any derogatory or defamatory posts, or videos of any other pupil, teacher or parent affiliated with Lawson Brown High School.

5.11. Staff, pupils, parents and non-educators are instructed to consider the reputation of the School in any posts or comments related to the School on any social media accounts. Reputational breaches by any of the aforementioned are dealt with via the Disciplinary Policy, and may include but is not limited to criminal charges, civil action.

## **CYBER BULLUING**

This document also serves as the bullying and cyberbullying policy of Lawson Brown High School as approved by the school governing body on (*date*). The policy has been drafted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996; the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 ('SASA'); the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996; applicable provincial legislation on school education; the Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011; the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

All learners have the right to attend a public school that is a safe and secure learning environment. It is the intent of Lawson Brown High School to provide all learners with an equitable opportunity to learn. To that end, the school has a significant interest in providing a safe, orderly and respectful school environment, which is conducive to teaching and learning.

Bullying is detrimental to the school environment and to learners' learning, achievement and well-being. It interferes with the mission of the school to educate learners, and disrupts school operations. Bullying affects not only learners who are targets, but also those who participate in and witness such behaviour. It must be addressed to ensure learner safety and an inclusive learning environment.

**It is important to understand what is meant by the concept of cyberbullying and bullying in general as it encompasses a wide spectrum of prohibited acts**

## **Bullying**

Means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more learners, educators, non-educators or visitors to the school premises. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal or physical behaviour, including any threatening, insulting or dehumanising gesture, by a learner or adult, which is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment, cause discomfort or humiliation, or unreasonably interfere with the learner's school performance or participation, and may involve, but is not limited to:

- (i) teasing;
- (ii) social exclusion;
- (iii) threat;
- (iv) intimidation;
- (v) stalking;
- (vi) physical violence;
- (vii) theft;
- (viii) sexual, religious or racial harassment;
- (ix) public humiliation; and (x) destruction of property.

**Crimen iniuria** means the unlawful, intentional and serious violation of the dignity or privacy of another person.

**Criminal defamation** means the unlawful and intentional publication of a matter concerning another, which tends to seriously injure his or her reputation.

## **Cyberbullying**

Means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, the transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, text messaging device and personal digital assistant.

Examples of conduct that may constitute cyberbullying include, but are not limited to:

- (i) posting slurs or rumours or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, disparaging, violent, abusive, profane or sexually oriented material about a learner on a website or other online application;



- (ii) posting misleading or fake photographs or digital video footage of a learner on websites, or creating fake websites or social networking profiles in the guise of posing as the target;
- (iii) impersonating or representing another learner through use of that other learner's electronic device or account to send e-mail, text messages and instant messages (IMs) or make phone calls;
- (iv) sending e-mail, text messages and IMs or leaving voicemail messages that are mean or threatening, or so numerous as to bombard the target's e-mail account, IM account or cellphone; and
- (v) using a camera phone or digital video camera to take and/or send embarrassing or 'sexting' photographs of other learners.

## **Harassment**

Is another form of bullying which means directly or indirectly engaging in conduct that the perpetrator knows or ought to know causes harm or inspires a reasonable belief that harm may be caused to the complainant or other related person by unreasonably:

- (a) following, watching, pursuing or accosting of the complainant or a related person, or loitering outside or near the building or place where the complainant or a related person resides, works, carries on business, studies or happens to be;
  - (b) engaging in verbal, electronic or any other communication aimed at the complainant or a related person, by any means, whether or not conversation ensues; or
  - (c) sending, delivering or causing the delivery of letters, telegrams, packages, facsimiles, electronic mail or other objects to the complainant or a related person, or leaving them where they will be found by, given to or brought to the attention of the complainant or a related person; or
- (i) amounts to sexual harassment of the complainant or a related person.
- Using the school's information system for offensive or harassing material. The following shall constitute computer harassment: (1) using the computer to annoy, harass, terrify, intimidate, threaten, offend or bother another person by conveying obscene language, pictures or other materials, or threats of bodily or psychological harm to the recipient; (2) using the computer to contact another

person repeatedly with the intent to annoy, harass or bother, whether or not any actual message is communicated, and/or where no purpose of legitimate communication exists, and where the recipient has expressed a desire for the communication to cease; (3) using the computer to contact another person repeatedly regarding a matter about which one does not have the legal right to communicate, once the recipient has provided reasonable notice that he or she desires such communication to cease; (4) using the computer to disrupt or damage the academic research, administrative or related pursuits of the school or another person; (5) using the computer to invade the privacy, academic or otherwise, of another, or the threatened invasion of privacy of another; and (6) material containing sexist, racist and/or violent content.

- Using the school's information system for discriminatory material. Users must have respect for all persons, and avoid discriminatory behaviour towards and victimisation of other social media users, whether on the basis of gender, race, class, creed, colour, sexual orientation, marital or family status, age, nationality, political belief, religion or disability.

If any person suspects or is told about a cyberbullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

### **Mobile phones**

- Ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone in question.
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, including the date, time and names.
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, and again record the date, times and names.
- Instruct the pupil to save the message/image.
- Accompany the pupil to the principal or the person designated by the principal.

### **Computers**

- Ask the pupil to pull up the material in question on the screen.
- Ask the pupil to save the material.
- Immediately make a printout of the offending material.



- Ensure that you have all the pages and information in the right order and that there are no omissions.
- Accompany the pupil, taking the offending material along, to the principal or the person designated by the principal.
- Normal procedures to interview pupils and to take statements will then be followed.

Parents and other adults who are aware of incidents of bullying are encouraged to report this behaviour to a staff member.

All other members of the school community, including learners, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy anonymously or in person to the principal or principal's designee.

Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an incident of bullying are prohibited. If it is determined that a learner has falsely accused another of bullying, such learner shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

In terms of section 54 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007, any person who knows that a sexual offence has been committed against a child must report such knowledge immediately to a police official. Failure to report such information is an offence. Therefore, any person involved in sexting or sexual harassment, or who has knowledge of such acts, is obliged to report such knowledge.

In case of a violation of any provision prescribed in this policy, the disciplinary procedure as set out in part 3, section 2 to 5, of the school's code of conduct is to be followed.

Alternative disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to:

- (i) meeting with the learner and the learner's parents where the parents will be shown the relevant information and they are informed of the offences committed by the particular learner;

- (ii) reflective activities, such as requiring the learner to write an essay about the learner's misbehaviour;
- (iii) counselling;
- (iv) anger management;
- (v) health counselling or intervention;
- (vi) mental health counselling;
- (vii) participation in skills-building and dispute resolution activities, such as socialemotional cognitive skills building, dispute resolution circles and restorative conferencing;
- (viii) community service; and
- (ix) in-school detention or suspension, which may take place during lunchtime, after school or on weekends.

Further sanctions include but is not limited to the confiscation of the learner phone and it will only be returned to him/her upon payment of a fine and a formal retraction of any or all derogatory or defamatory information as well as a public apology.

Future use of the relevant device may also be suspended pending further assessment by the principle and teachers who will make sure the learner complied with the sanction imposed.

Staff should also realise that there is the possibility of legal liability for inappropriate acts of harassment, cyber bullying and inappropriate dissemination of material and information relating to the School, staff, learners and parents.

### **Policy amendments**

The school governing body may from time to time amend, supplement, modify or alter this policy.

SIGNED AT

ON THIS

DAY OF

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Governing body chair

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School principal

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