



TIPS FOR USE OF WHATSAPP IN RELATION TO POPIA COMPLIANCE

1. General tips:

- 1.1 When setting up a WhatsApp group, the administrator must set parameters.
- 1.2 The original intention for the establishment of a WhatsApp group is for work purposes and members must avoid straying from the original purpose.
- 1.3 The administrator must ensure that every person operates within the confines of the rules and the law.
- 1.4 It is recommended that every group has a Terms of Reference or set of rules governing the use and operation of that group.
- 1.5 Inform members that threatening and bullying behaviour will not be tolerated on the group.
- 1.6 Ensure that control measures are in place.
- 1.7 Ensure that you obtain the consent of a member before he/she is added to the group.
- 1.8 The member must be advised that he/she may leave the group at any time if they feel that inappropriate acts are executed and or inappropriate language is being used.
- 1.9 It is recognised best practice in this environment that messages are education related, inspirational, or for the sharing of information.
- 1.10 It is important to remember that offensive messages are not allowed on the group. The administrator may delete a member if he/she offends and disrespects colleagues with inappropriate actions/posts.

2. The role of the administrator is to:

- 2.1 Obtain permission from a member to be placed on the group. The potential member must be informed what the rules are as well as the purpose of the group, viz. under which circumstances the person may be deleted, what the professional standards will be on the group, etc.

- 2.2 Advise members how to conduct themselves and how to go about submitting a complaint.
- 2.3 Inform members that confidential information about colleagues may not be divulged.
- 2.4 Check with individual members what may or may not be shared about them. Some members do not appreciate their birthdays to be announced or others to know about personal issues in their lives. Some members may also not want their contact details to be shared with others.
- 2.5 Inform members when he/she will be reported to their supervisor or Labour Relations for possible transgressions.

3. What employees must remember when using social media like WhatsApp at work:

- 3.1 Respect the intended purpose and the objective of the group.
- 3.2 When posting, remember that your comments are in the public domain.
- 3.3 Comment online in the same way you would in a meeting or a public forum.
- 3.4 Do not discuss confidential or classified information.
- 3.5 Employees are expected to treat their peers with respect, both in the physical workplace and on social media platforms.
- 3.6 The values and code of conduct of the organisation apply to all members.
- 3.7 Always remember that your views are your own.
- 3.8 Be clear and concise.
- 3.9 By using official logos and insignia of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) or a school, you may imply that you are authorised to speak on behalf of the WCED or school.
- 3.10 Please remember that on your social media platforms you only represent yourself or your personal views, if applicable.
- 3.11 Inappropriate remarks could damage the government's, your colleagues', or your reputation.

- 3.12 Before you post, ask yourself: Is it relevant? Is it necessary? Is it the correct time to post?
- 3.13 Think before you post a message.
- 3.14 A WhatsApp work group should not be used to send messages or content of a personal nature.
- 3.15 Do not spam the group by sending memes, videos, pictures, and news that are not in line with the purpose for which the group is created.
- 3.16 Never send content, information or “news” that has not been verified. Conveying unauthenticated content can be harmful.
- 3.17 If you feel uncomfortable in a group for any reason, feel free to leave or mute the notifications.
- 3.18 Before sending a complaint to the group, it is recommended that you first share your thoughts with the group administrator.
- 3.19 Do not get angry if someone does not respond to your messages in a group. It is recommended to send him/her a direct message.
- 3.20 When forwarding a message, picture or video and you are choosing multiple recipients, avoid sending it to all your groups, since the same content will hardly ever be suitable or of interest to all.
- 3.21 Avoid topics such as religion and politics, as an individual's religious beliefs or political preferences must be respected.
- 3.22 Do not send content that is violent or pornographic of nature or could be construed as inappropriate. It is always important to bear in mind that some members may feel uncomfortable, especially when the content affects someone's reputation.
- 3.23 Avoid conversations with only one person. When noticing that you are having a dialogue with a single member of the group, consider changing the conversation to direct message, as the rest of the group may not be interested in reading your conversation with another person.
- 3.24 When replying to a specific comment, use the “reply” function to avoid confusion.
- 3.25 Write clearly, using simple language; bear in mind that your words can be interpreted in multiple ways, so use short sentences that cannot be misinterpreted.

- 3.26 Do not abuse emojis. There are some that do not need or require an explanation, but others can be interpreted in different ways and generate confusion.
 - 3.27 Avoid sending large videos or files as it may saturate the memory of members' smartphones or waste their data or internet plan.
 - 3.28 Always be professional and polite.
 - 3.29 Avoid personal attacks on any member in the group.
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