



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

**PROVINCE OF THE EASTERN CAPE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

ECDoE COMMUNICATION POLICY

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1. BACKGROUND AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The development of this revised Communications and Media Policy for the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) firstly stems from one of the resolutions adopted in the Annual Performance Plan 2021/22 which states that in the next five years the Department's approach to service delivery will be implemented under four guiding principles, namely: strong communication, accountability, performance management and improved audit outcomes.

Secondly, the Directorate: Communications and Events Management has the responsibility to provide guidance to all the different units of ECDoE regarding how communication should be handled, both internally amongst the ECDoE officials and with external stakeholders or partners. In this respect the Directorate: Communications and Events Management has been on a journey to constantly develop and adapt communications related policies dating back to the old "Department of Education Policy on Communicating with the Public Media" to more recent guiding documents such as the 2021-2025 Communications Strategy which has been developed in line with the Five-Year Strategic Plan (2020-2025) that sets out targets to be implemented by the ECDoE.

Thirdly, public service is faced with the emergence of worldwide mishaps that directly affect its operations, case in point being the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic as well as the digital revolution that now allows conversation with the public rather than simply communicating to them. It has therefore become imperative for the ECDoE to ensure that it has a Communications and Media Policy that talks to these recent events and changes. The role of government communication is to ensure that all citizens receive information that will empower them to make informed decisions and choices. The central recipients of the information from the ECDoE are the schools and the communities that they find themselves in. The provincial Communications and Media Policy puts the citizenry at the heart of its policy. Thus, at the heart of our strategy as the department are the learners, schools and communities we serve.

The context of communications in the department must be viewed within the context of the current situation wherein the Head Office of the ECDOE which houses the Office of the MEC and the Office of the Head of Department is located in Zwelitsha, with 12 districts across the province, 219 circuit offices, 5453 schools of which 5084 are public schools, 238 independent (private schools), 54 Section 20 public schools and 46 special schools.

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the ECDoE proved that timeous communication can be used to alter perceptions, as well as keep our core constituency abreast of all developments. It is in this background this revised Communications and Media Policy has the entire section (Part Three) dedicated to addressing social media communications.

In conclusion, the Directorate: Communications and Events Management is committed to facilitating the implementation of this new Communications and Media Policy and to ensure that it remains relevant at all times by effecting the necessary updates and changes.

PART ONE

COMMUNICATION POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 The Objectives of this policy are to:

- 1.1.1 Ensure that communications across the Department of Education is well co-ordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.
 - 1.1.2 To provide the public, stakeholders and the media with complete, accurate, clear and timely information about the Department's policies, services and initiatives.
 - 1.1.3 Ensure that the Department is visible, accessible and accountable to the public it serves.
 - 1.1.4 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.
 - 1.1.5 Guide officials of the Department in their dealings with the media, (internal communication) and the Department's stakeholders (external communication).
- 1.2 This policy is applicable to all officials of the Department, from Senior Management to line function staff members.
- 1.3 This document contains PART 1: Communications Policy, PART 2: Media Engagement Policy and PART 3: Social Media Policy.

Definition of Terms	What it means in this document
Department	The Department of Education in the Eastern Cape Province (ECDOE).
Media Policy	The policy that sets guidelines and procedures on all media liaison by the ECDOE's officials.
External Communication	Communication that flows from inside the department to the publics and or vice versa.
Internal Communication	Communication within the officials of the Department.
Branding	Branding of the Department means the approved departmental branding to be marketed and easily recognised.
Stakeholders	People or groups that have an interest in the dealings of the Department, or whom the Department deals with frequently in its operations.
Corporate Identity	The Department's identity stemming from its branding processes.
Image	The Department's appearance to the public is its image that should be positive and protected at all times.
Requestor	A person making a request to access records held by the Department.
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act.
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act.
MEC	Member of the Executive Council - Education political head
Department	The Department of Education.
Media Policy	The policy that sets guidelines and procedures on all media liaison by the ECDOE's officials.
Spokesperson	Designated Official to interact with the media.
Head of Department	Administrative Head of Department.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The South African Constitution of 1996

Some sections in the following Chapters of the Constitution give legal mandate to this policy:

- 3.1.1 Chapter 2 Bill of Rights
- 3.1.2 Chapter 6 Provinces
- 3.1.3 Chapter 10 Public Administration
- 3.1.4 Chapter 11 Security Services
- 3.1.5 Chapter 13 Finance

3.2 National Language Policy Framework

Eleven languages were granted official language status in South Africa in terms of Section 6 of the Constitution. This policy strongly encourages the use of indigenous languages and takes into account the linguistic diversity of the country.

3.3 White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service (Batho Pele White Paper), 1995

The aim of this White Paper is to provide a policy framework for the transformation of the Public Service. It is about how public services are provided and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which services are provided.

3.4 Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (PAIA)

The PAIA gives all South Africans the right to have access to records held by the Department. It allows for procedures of requesting this information to be put in place by the Department through its Promotion of Access to Information Manual.

3.5 Public Service Act of 1994

This legislation regulates the administration of the Department, the operations and conduct of its officials.

3.6 The Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No 2 of 1999)

The Act regulates financial management by the Department and ensures that all resources of the Department are managed efficiently and effectively.

3.7 The Disciplinary Code and Procedure for the Public Service (PSCBC Resolution 2 of 1999)

The Disciplinary Code determines, amongst others, that the unauthorized use of State property, the negligent or wilful loss of or damage to State Property and a refusal to obey security regulations are instances of misconduct.

3.8 Copyright Act, 1978 (Act No 98 of 1978)

This Act protects the Copyright of the Department which it has in respect of any document, drawing and the like created by an official for the Department.

3.9 Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002 (Act No 25 of 2002)

The Act makes it an offence to interfere with electronic messages or records without authority in order to modify or destroy same. It also provides for the recognition of electronic messages as legally enforceable or as capable of being produced in evidence in legal cases and provides that Government may conduct business by electronic communications if it so wishes.

3.10 Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act No 36 of 2005)

This Act provides for the licensing of anyone who renders electronic communication network services, electronic communication services and broadcasting services.

3.11 Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS)

This policy document contains the security requirements to which the use of Government information must comply. It includes restrictions on access to certain classified information and the safekeeping thereof.

3.12 Government Communication Policy – 2018 developed by Government

Communication and Information systems (GCIS) serves as the custodian of government communications.

3.13 Integrated Provincial Communication Strategy Framework, 2019 – 24

This is a long-term strategy to cover the electoral cycle of the sixth (6th) administration to promote common communication agenda and ensure a co-ordinated and integrated communication of the impact of government programmes.

3.14 Eastern Cape Provincial Government's Communications Policy Document (2019)

The document aims to ensure that communication across the province is coherent, reliable, ethical, open, encourages participation, is well co-ordinated, transformative, professional, consistent, credible, effectively managed, impactful and meets the needs of all citizens.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The principles adopted by the Department in respect of Communications are:

4.1 The Department shall: -

4.1.1 Comply with National and Provincial directives in marketing, branding and creation of official documents.

- 4.1.2 Respond to media enquiries in a timeous manner through its Head of Communications and Spokesperson of the Department and the Head of Department. The Deputy Information Officers may respond only when delegated to do so by the HOD and or the Head of Communications. This also applies to members of Senior Management and officials in line- function directorates. Guidance in this function will be provided by the HOD, Directorate: Communications and Events Management and/or Office of the MEC.
- 4.1.3 Develop its own Language Policy in line with the National and/or Provincial Language Policy Frameworks, thereafter workshop officials on its usage.
- 4.1.4 Manage Communications, marketing and branding of the Department through Directorate: Communications and Events Management.
- 4.1.5 Respect and effectively utilise the Department's colours in an effort to create a brand that is the Department of Education.
- 4.1.6 Respect and effectively utilise the provincial Coat of Arms as prescribed by the Provincial Government.

4.2 Directorate: Communications and Events Management shall: -

- 4.2.1 Work co-operatively with the Head of Department and MEC's Offices in managing the flow of information from the Department to the media and/or public, vice versa.
- 4.2.2 Advise Directorates on the design, editing and layout of all promotional and informational documents produced for official purposes.
- 4.2.3 Work cooperatively with Directorates in managing the Communication service, marketing and branding of the Department.
- 4.2.4 Provide support to Directorates in managing the marketing and publicising of their events.

5. CORPORATE IDENTITY

- 5.1 The Department of Education shall be recognized with the colours yellow and blue as its official identity, accompanied by the Provincial Coat of Arms.
- 5.2 To maintain a recognisable and unified corporate identity throughout the Department and its Directorates as well as addressing informational risks and adhering to legislation, all promotional material must be submitted to Directorate: Communications and Events Management for quality assurance whereafter the Director: Communications and Events Management will make a recommendation to the Head of Department, who in consultation with the MEC, will approve the material.
- 5.3 Directorates must always seek advice from Director: Communications and Events Management if not certain about the shades of yellow and blue to use.

5.4 Directorates' communication resources, designs and presentations shall be done in a co-ordinated and similar manner, not straying away from the prescriptions and directives from National and Provincial Governments.

6. USAGE OF PROVINCIAL COAT OF ARMS

6.1 The Department shall respect the prescriptions laid out by the Office of the Premier and provincial government in using the Provincial Coat of Arms.

7. USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AND REFLECTING DIVERSITY

7.1 The Eastern Cape Province has identified four official languages, i.e. IsiXhosa, English, Afrikaans and Sesotho.

7.1.1 The Department respects all four provincial official languages in Communicating with its internal and external stakeholders.

7.2 The Department must ensure that all its publications and other communication/promotional materials depict the diverse nature of its stakeholders in a fair, representative and inclusive manner.

8. PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES AND SPONSORSHIPS: -

8.1 The department commits itself to adhere to proper procurement procedures for all communication services.

8.2 The department may not use public funds to purchase advertising in support of any political party.

8.3 The department will acknowledge its sponsors when communicating with the public about a sponsored activity or activities embarked upon in partnership with other institutions/entities.

8.4 The Department shall retain intellectual copyright for all material produced by service providers on behalf of the Department.

8.5 All paperwork submitted for procurement pertaining to promotional material must be stamped and approved by Director: Communications and Events Management.

9. MEDIA MONITORING

9.1 The Directorate: Communications and Events Management will monitor the media for mentions of the Department in order to analyse the public environment, concerns and perceptions as it relates to the Department's policies, programs, services and initiatives.

9.2 Media Monitoring will be done for the following purposes: -

9.2.1 To evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities such as advertising and to plan and evaluate marketing initiatives, among other applications.

9.2.2 To anticipate issues that may arise and to formulate appropriate response strategies.

9.2.3 To evaluate and address public needs and expectations effectively.

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 The Directorate: Communications and Events Management will provide advice and support to managers and Directorates, in planning, implementing and evaluating the Department's consultation processes, such as imbizos, public meetings etc.

10.2 Department officials embarking on consultative activities must liaise with Directorate: Communications and Events Management in order to ensure that the promotional material prepared for such events are in line with the Department's Branding, colours and logo.

11. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

11.1 Internal communication includes, but not limited to, oral presentations, staff meetings, workshops, notice boards, the intranet, memos.

11.2 The Department must encourage open and collaborative communication among senior management and other officials to achieve the Department's goals and to ensure quality information services for the public.

11.3 All internal Communication must be managed in line with the national and provincial language policies.

11.4 Channels for internal communication include but not limited to the following: -

- Circulars
- Memos
- Emails
- SMS
- Telephones
- Intranet
- Internal newsletters
- Notice boards

11.5 Circulation of internal memorandums:

- Memos must be signed off by the relevant manager and delivered by administrative staff to other managers and or units.
- Only the font ARIAL, size 12 (twelve) must be used for all memos of the Department.
- The Coat of Arms must always be displayed on the left-hand side of all correspondence within the Department (**See Annexure A**).
- All memos within the Department must be distributed using a folder/file that is clearly marked.
- Memos posted on notice boards should have the important parts highlighted for easy reading by employees.

11.6 News about staff/Staff announcements should be done as follows: -

- By circulars, memo's, e-mails through Directorate: Communications and Events Management.
- Staff notices on intranet to be updated at least twice a week.

11.7 Notice Boards

11.7.1 The notice boards will be updated by staff members from the Communications and Events Management.

12. Risk Communication

12.1 The department, through the Head of Communications will foster open dialogue with the public on issues involving risk and build a climate of trust, credibility and understanding by being forthcoming about facts.

12.3 The Department will respond to public perceptions and provide factual information to address misconceptions or misunderstandings about risk.

13. CRISIS AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

13.1 In times of crisis the Department must, the Head of Communications must be informed in order to formulate a proper and accurate response plan to help maintain and restore public confidence in the department.

13.2 All emergencies and controversial issues should immediately be reported to the Head of Department who in-turn will report them to the Office of the MEC.

14. MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDINATION

14.1 Communications must be integrated into the corporate management processes and procedures. It must also be a shared responsibility that is co-ordinated with other areas of management.

14.2 Communications must maintain clear working links at all times with other core functions of the Department.

14.3 The Department has to ensure that the resources needed to fulfil the requirements of this policy are available and carefully managed.

14.4 All officials of the Department must ensure the consistency of information and messages across all channels of communication, including telephone, e-mail, Internet, website and electronic transmission.

15. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

15.1 The Department's and Strategic documents must consider communication requirements, views and concerns of audiences inside and outside of the institution (i.e., the internal and external environments).

15.2 The communication strategy must be periodically reviewed, evaluated and updated in conjunction with the planning and budgeting cycles of the department.

16. TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND NEW MEDIA

16.1 The Department shall leave space for technological innovations and stay current with developments in communications practice. It will also put in place procedures for this to occur.

16.2 As the Department adopts new means of communication, it must continue to reach its stakeholders whose access to technology may be limited or who prefer to receive information from the department through more traditional means.

17. INTERNET, WEBSITE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

17.1 The Department must maintain an active presence on the internet through its website and intranet on which its services and information can be viewed.

17.2 To ensure congruence with other communication activities, the Department's website will be reviewed regularly by Directorate: Communications and Events Management to continuously oversee and advise on website and intranet content and design.

17.3 Collaboration shall be maintained between Communications and Information Technology specialists to ensure effective planning and management of electronic information services.

18. EVENTS, PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS

18.1 The Department will not participate in, or lend support to, partisan events organised for political party purposes.

18.2 The Department will through guidance from the Office of the Premier, adopt a sound and co-ordinated approach to its participation in fairs and exhibitions, especially where other departments are also participating. Multiple departments appearing at the same event must display a unified presence that promotes common themes and messages of the Provincial Government.

19. DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS

19.1 The department will involve the expertise of the Protocol Officer in the department planning and organizing departmental events.

19.2 The Communications and Events Management Directorate will assist all units in the co-ordination and planning of events as per the standard operating procedures.

20. ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

20.1 To ensure the integrity and efficacy of government advertising, the Department through the Head of Department and Directorate: Communications and Events Management will ensure that advertising campaigns and products are aligned with the department's priorities and strategic goals.

20.2 To ensure congruence with other communication activities, all advertising and marketing plans of the Department must be approved by Directorate: Communications and Events Management.

21. PUBLISHING

The Department will facilitate public access to its publications – all information materials, regardless of publishing medium, produced for public dissemination or for limited circulation outside of government. It will also ensure that published material in all formats meets official language requirements and acceptable design standards.

22. COPYRIGHT AND LICENSING

22.1 Copyrights and ownership rights will be respected and the department will ensure compliance with copyright legislations.

22.2 The Department shall retain intellectual copyright for all material produced by service providers on behalf of the Department.

23. TRAINING

Communications and Events Management Directorate will orientate officials at all levels on the Communications and Media Policy of the Department. New officials must be informed about the policy, and encouraged to familiarize themselves with it, upon appoint

PART TWO

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Objectives of this Media Engagement Policy are to: -

- 1.1.1 Ensure that communications across the Department of Education is well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.
- 1.1.2 To provide the public, stakeholders and the media with complete, accurate, clear and timely information about the Department's policies, services and initiatives.
- 1.1.3 Ensure that media queries are responded to in an effective and timeous manner, by the Departmental Spokesperson/s as highlighted in this policy.

1.2 This policy is applicable to all officials of the Department, from Senior Management to line function staff.

2. THE DIRECTORATE: COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT SHALL: -

- 2.1 Handle all media enquiries through the guidance of the HOD and the Office of the MEC.
- 2.2 Play a support role to officials of the department who have been approached by the media for information or comment.

3. MEDIA RELATIONS

Journalists and other media representatives play an important 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 common ground between the media and government institutions is that they both seek to keep the public informed about activities of government.

- 3.1 The department must cultivate proactive relations with the media to promote public awareness and understanding of government policies, programs, services and initiatives. This will be done by keeping a detailed list of the Province and Country's media contact details.
- 3.2 The department shall endeavour to reach and inform the media on issues of importance to decision-makers and the public. The Department can engage the media using a variety of communication tools, including news conferences, news releases and presentations.
- 3.3 The department, through the Directorate: Communications and Events Management and the HOD, will consult the MEC's office when planning media campaigns or strategies that could involve ministerial participation, or when preparing a response to a media enquiry that could have implications for the MEC.
- 3.4 The Department shall ensure the quality and consistency of information is provided to the media in the four official languages recognised in the Eastern Cape Province.

Note:

To avoid misunderstanding regarding the enquiry, it is recommended that officials receiving enquiries from the media houses, request that the questions be forwarded to them in a written form through the media liaison or spokesperson's e-mails.

4. PUBLIC EVENTS

The Department shall arrange public events and announcements, including news conferences, from time to time for communication purposes.

- 4.1 The Department must ensure processes and procedures are in place to assist spokespersons, managers and other designated officials in responding to media enquiries.
- 4.2 The Directorate: Communications and Events Management must ensure that media requests, particularly for interviews or technical information on specialised subjects, are directed to knowledgeable managers, information officers or staff designated to speak as official representatives of the Department.

5. CO-ORDINATION

It is important that information from the Department of Education comes from one source so as to avoid conflicting statements from reaching the media. All responses from line function managers should be channelled through the Director: Communications and Events Management, so that the Department can truly speak in one voice.

6. OPENNESS

The principle of openness and transparency should always be adhered to when dealing with the media.

- 6.1 If the spokesperson or any other official being approached by the media is unable to comment, he/she should give sound reasons.
- 6.2 Information should only be withheld for sound reasons, e.g., sub-judice issues, labour issues, protection of confidential information and other related reasons.

7. PROACTIVENESS

The department shall be proactive in its dealings with the media, i.e. we should not only wait for media enquiries, but also initiate contact to showcase the work we do. We should remember that not all news can be "good news". The trick is to manage even the "bad news" in a proactive manner so that it can be less damaging to image of the Department.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Caution should be taken to ensure that records and information that needs to be kept confidential remain confidential (refer to the Departmental Promotion of Access to Information Manual).

9. PHOTOGRAPHS

9.1 Access to information Act applies. No photographs of facilities (this includes administrative building and institutions of learning throughout the province) of the department can be taken by representatives of the media unless a formal written request was made to Information Officers and permission was granted. The photographer will have to disclose the reason behind the need for the photograph, and how/where it will be used.

9.2 It is the prerogative of the stakeholder to agree/refuse permission for photographs of him/her to be taken by members of the media.

10. IMPARTIALITY

All media must be treated with equal respect, whether it is a small community or a larger national newspaper. The media have networks and there may be instances where stories are picked up by small media companies and end up being national or provincial news, therefore no request for information or comment by media groups may not be attended to on reasons of their demographics.

11. SPOKESPERSONS

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.

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

11.2 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 it is handed to the media.

11.3 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.

11.4 Spokespersons must be knowledgeable in official protocols, should they have to address Members of Parliament.

11.5 They must also respect privacy rights, security needs, and matters before the courts, government policy, Cabinet confidences and ministerial responsibility.

PART THREE

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 PURPOSE

The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) has developed this Social Media Policy as part of its broader Communications and Media Policy document in recognition of the growing popularity of the use of social media in its operations and by its staff, clients, stakeholders and partners. In essence the purpose of this policy 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. For purposes of this policy "social media" is a term for a wide-spectrum of user-driven content technologies. Commonly used social media tools include but are not limited to Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, weblogs, forums and discussion boards and wikis.

In order to reach as many people as possible the ECDoE balances its communications programme by engaging in traditional media as well as social media. The primary purpose of social media is to take part in on-going conversations of interest to the ECDoE, disseminate brief messages quickly, provide links for further information, and promote ECDoE-sponsored activities.

As public servants we have a unique opportunity to step out and be part of the digital revolution, joining a historical transition that allows conversations with the public, rather than simply communicating to them. South African government employees have the same rights of free speech as other citizens when it comes to the use of, and participation in online social media platforms. As public servants, however, government employees have some additional obligations when it comes to sustaining, building and defending the reputation of government through social media.

Social media are powerful communication tools that have a significant impact on institutional and professional reputations. Because the lines between personal voice and institutional voice are blur, the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) has produced and published policy guidelines in April 2011 to help clarify how best to enhance and protect institutional and personal reputations when participating in social media. ECDoE has therefore benchmarked its policy on those guidelines provided by GCIS ("Social Media Policy Guidelines" April 2011 GCIS).

Users of the ECDoE's social media channels are required to demonstrate the highest ethical standards and conduct and to act responsibly when they exchange ideas and information on social media networks. Further, users must understand that they have responsibilities as representatives of the ECDoE and that their actions can have either a positive or a negative impact on the public image and reputation of the Department.

This document aims to protect the ECDoE from any unexpected negative outcome resulting from the use of social media.

1.2 SCOPE, APPLICABILITY AND AUTHORITY

- 1.2.1 This policy applies to all social media activity undertaken by users of the ECDoE's social media networks, including but not limited to staff as well as third-party suppliers representing the ECDoE, consultants or any other person participating in social media and who may be identified as having an association with the ECDoE, or where the ECDoE infrastructure is used to access social media.
- 1.2.2 All staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Department and its services, customers, employees, stakeholders and partners.
- 1.2.3 Breach of this policy may be dealt with under the ECDoE disciplinary procedures and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.
- 1.2.4 The policy differentiates between official use of social media and private usage.
- 1.2.5 It applies no matter whether that social media use takes place on ECDoE's premises, while travelling for business or while working from home.
- 1.2.7 This policy does not apply to ECDoE employees using social media in their personal capacities; however, employees are always required to follow the standards of general ethical conduct.
- 1.2.8 This policy does not supersede or replace existing legal responsibilities and policies in effect.
- 1.2.9 Social media sites and services include (but are not limited to): -
- Any website or medium that allows for public communication, including but not limited to social and professional networking sites, blogs, micro-blogging sites, video-and photo-sharing sites, forums, discussion boards and groups, podcasting sites and instant messaging services.
 - Popular social networks like Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp.
 - Online review websites like Reevoo and Trustpilot.
 - Sharing and discussion sites like Delicious and Reddit.
 - Photographic social networks like Flickr and Instagram.
 - Question and answer social networks like Quora and Yahoo Answers.
 - Professional social networks like LinkedIn.
- 1.2.10 The policy is not aimed at restraining freedom of communication and sharing of ideas, information and opinions by staff, stakeholders, partners and students, provided that the information shared on social media does not jeopardise the goodwill, trust and professional relationship between the user and the ECDoE.
- 1.2.11 Related areas that fall outside the scope of these guidelines include: -
- Internet and e-mail use and policy.
 - Internet search engine optimisation.

- Technical implementation of social media platforms i.e. a focus on the hardware, software, technical protocols and human resource issues relating to the actual implementation of social media tools within the Department.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The department embraces the evolution and use of social media as a tool for communicating in the global world. Given that social media afford users a public platform to express themselves, it is important that the department establishes clear guidelines regarding responsible behaviour, standards of conduct and expectations that users must adhere to when using social media for official purposes or where the use of social media impacts on the department.

The department recognises the importance of social media as a communication tool and with this policy, aims to encourage transparent, responsible, honest and open communication on social media platforms.

The department values entrenched rights such as freedom of expression, association, the ability to disseminate diverse views and academic freedom. It is however important to understand that freedom of speech and or expression is not absolute but is limited and measured against the existing norms and standards. These include: -

- The Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights contained in Chapter 2, and or any other relevant law.
- The department's vision, mission, values and strategic objectives, code of conduct and other applicable rules, regulations, policies and practices; The right to freedom of expression, speech and association is not absolute and is limited where such expression infringes on other fundamental rights and may result in discrimination on the basis of race, age, religion, marital status, nationality, origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation and/or may constitute bullying or hate speech.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

3.1.1 The Communications and Events Management Directorate has the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

3.1.2 The Director: Communications and Events Management is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our operations.

3.1.3 All staff are responsible for their own compliance with this policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. All staff should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Director: Communications and Events Management.

3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS MANAGEMENT

3.2.1 The different sections of the Department must submit approved content they

require posted on social media platforms to the Communications and Events Management Directorate team, which then needs to be approved and signed off by the Head of Department or Director: Communications and Events Management in the event where the Head of Department is not available.

3.2.2 Communications and Events Management Directorate is responsible for the management of the content on the Department's social media accounts.

3.2.3 The Communications and Events Management Directorate must ensure consistency of messaging, to avoid confusion and miscommunication.

3.2.4 The Communications and Events Management Directorate is expected to respond to positive or negative comments on the respective social media platforms.

3.2.5 The Communications and Events Management Directorate will be responsible for ensuring adherence and reviewing of this policy.

3.3 OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

3.3.1 Everyone who operates the Department's social media account or who uses their personal social media accounts at work has some responsibility for implementing this policy.

3.3.2 However, these people have key responsibilities: -

3.3.2.1 The Director: Communications and Events Management is ultimately responsible for ensuring that everyone uses the Department's social media platforms safely, appropriately and in line with the Department's general policies and objectives.

3.3.2.2 The Information Technology Manager is responsible for providing apps and tools to manage the department's social media presence and track any key performance indicators. He or she is also responsible for proactively monitoring for social media security threats.

3.3.2.3 The Directorate: Communications and Events Management is also responsible for working with the various sections of the Department to roll out marketing ideas and campaigns through our social media channels.

4. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

4.1. 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 overused 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 to continue: -

- (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 breach any of the rules set out in paragraph 5 below.
- (c) use must not interfere with business or office commitments.
- (d) use must comply with all the other general policies of the Department.

5. GENERAL RULES FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Be thoughtful and polite. Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online. Employees should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email.
- 5.4 Any member of staff who feels that they have been harassed or bullied or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media platform should inform the Director: Communications and Events Management.
- 5.5 Never disclose commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information. 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.
- 5.6 Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent. Users may not use social media to publish or share any copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, unless permitted by that third party. 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.
- 5.7 It is acceptable to quote a small excerpt from an article, particularly for the purposes of commenting on it or criticising it. However, if you think an excerpt is too big, it probably is. Quote accurately, include references and when in doubt, link, don't copy.
- 5.8 Before you include a link to a third-party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it. All links must be done so that it is clear to the user that they have moved to the third party's website.
- 5.9 When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.

- 5.10 Do not post, upload, forward or post a link to chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip.
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts and correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry upset, return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner.
- 5.14 If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then you shouldn't do it. If in doubt, always discuss it with any official from the Communications and Events Management Directorate first.
- 5.15 Don't discuss colleagues, clients of the department, service providers, stakeholders and partners without their prior approval.
- 5.16 Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory, e.g. politics, religion or criticism.
- 5.17 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.
- 5.18 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.
- 5.19 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.
- 5.20 Handle 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 handle further communications via the most appropriate channel — usually email or telephone.
- 5.21 Only people who have been authorised to use the department's social networking accounts may do so. Authorisation is provided by the Director: Communications and Events Management.
- 5.22 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 case to be made for opening a new account, employees should raise this with the Directorate: Communications and Events Management.

- 5.23 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.
- 5.24 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 liaise with the Director: Communications or with the Government Communication and Information Systems.
- 5.25 Only the authorised spokesperson or duly delegated manager may provide comment to the media on government-related issues. If an employee is contacted 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.

6. POLICY ENFORCEMENT AND CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Users are expected to be mindful of the fact that any activity on social media platforms has an impact on the image of the Department, and users should at all times refrain from any activity that may tarnish this image. Users are expected to engage on social media in a responsible manner.

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 this policy.

7. COMMUNICATION POLICY LIFE CYCLE

This policy should be reviewed every five (5) years.

8. DOCUMENT METADATA

Document number:	
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Signed at ZWELITSHA on this 04 day of NOVEMBER 2021


 DR N. MBUDE
 HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Annexure A

Policy guidelines: Usage of Provincial Coat of Arms

The Provincial Government approved the highest visual symbol of the Provincial Administration – the Coat of Arms – as the official symbol for government on 25 March 1996. The Coat of Arms is the visual representation of the Eastern Cape Government Brand. Unauthorized reproduction of this Coat of Arms is an offence under the Heraldry Act of 1962. Authority to reproduce it must be sought from Provincial Communications, Office of the Premier, Province of the Eastern Cape.

Elements of the Coat of Arms

Rising Sun - The Rising Sun symbolizes the friendliness and positive attitude of the people of the Eastern Cape as well as representing the dawning of a new era and bright future of growth, development and prosperity.



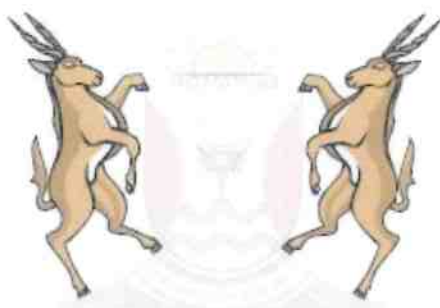
Leopard Skin Head Ring- The leopard skin head ring is a symbol of the prestige, power and heritage of the province. The Leopard is an animal of strength and is universally considered as a sign of authority.



The Shield - The Shield represents the protection and preservation of the Aloe - a symbol of strength due to its healing powers. The three flowers sprouting from a single stem represent the unity of the Eastern Cape's people. The blue Lines are heraldic symbols for the sea and represent the magnificent coastline of the province.

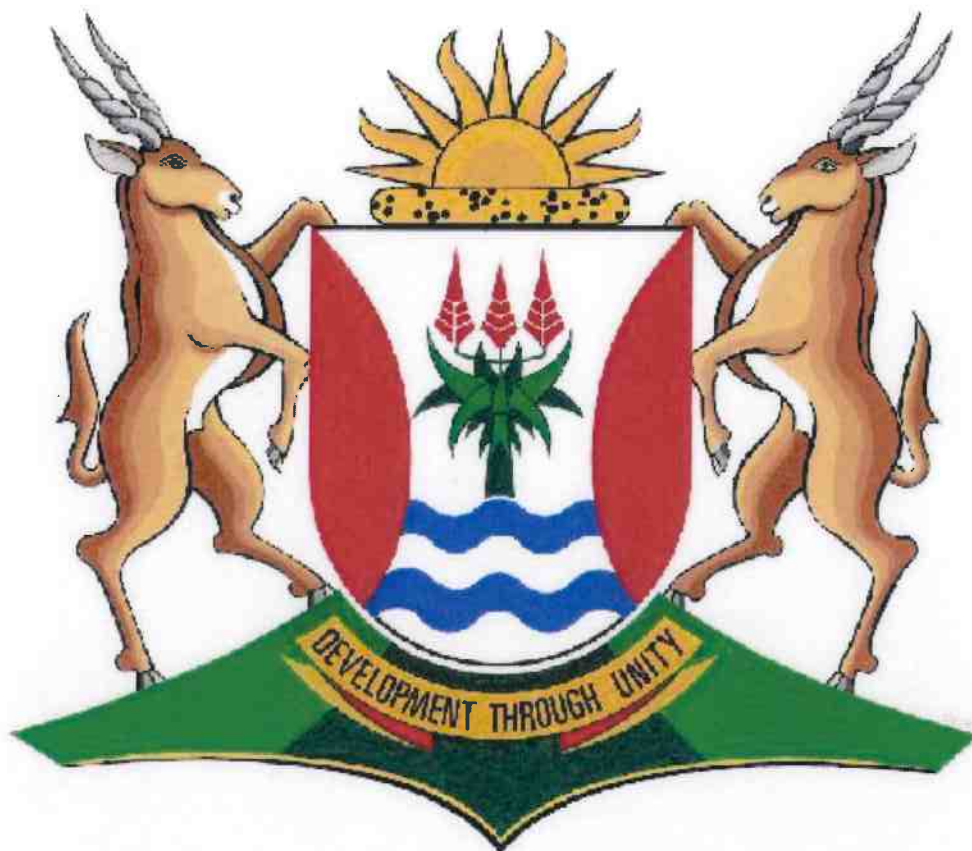


The Eland - The Eland Bull represents magnificence and was by far the most widespread of all larger antelope in the Eastern Cape. It is now being reintroduced into the province's nature reserves and game farms and is an important part of folklore, especially amongst the Khoi San who held it in high esteem.



The Motto - "Development through Unity". The province strives to develop all its people in all facets of life, in the pursuit of sustainable prosperity through a united people moving together towards this goal.





A. Applications

The Provincial Coat of Arms may be applied:

(a) Visually –

- (i) On provincial government stationery, forms, websites and intranet.
- (ii) As decoration on the Mace of the Provincial Government.
- (ii) Decoration on the walls of the Council of Provinces.
- (iii) As a watermark or background on number plates within the province.
- (v) A symbol of the Premier's Office.
- (vi) For branding purposes on buildings of the Provincial Government.
- (vii) On crockery used by the Provincial Government.
- (viii) On corporate gifts and promotional items.

(b) Orally –

- (i) The Provincial Coat of Arms may be recited orally as a praise poem (umbongo) or delivered musically on selected events. This could be done in a way to popularise the Coat of Arms, and furthermore, as an endeavour to entrench it deeper in an African oral tradition. (Consideration to be taken not to elevate the oral rendering of the Coat of Arms to a status close to that of the National Anthem.)

B. Guidelines

To address the current variations and inconsistency in the application of the Eastern Cape Government Brand and inconsistent visual standards, the following Corporate Image Branding must be implemented by all provincial Eastern Cape departments:

1. Reproduction and Display

- (a) The Provincial Coat of Arms should not be overlapped or blended with other visual objects.
- (b) No borders may be drawn around the Coat of Arms, or changes made to the thickness of lines.
- (c) The Coat of Arms should be displayed in whole, not in part, sections or details as this may distort its intended symbolism.
- (d) The composition area of the Coat of Arms may not be interfered with, defaced or creatively adapted to any form.
- (e) No changes may be made to the colour scheme when printed in full colour.
- (f) No changes may be made to the font type.
- (g) No rotation or skewing may be made.

2. Uniform Corporate Identity Branding

(a) Naming Structure

- (i) Departments will be permitted to select a preferred naming structure using either a functional name depicting the core line-function (e.g. Eastern Cape Health for the Department of Health) or an abbreviated version or acronym (e.g. COGTA for the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs).
- (j) The naming structure should be placed on the right-hand side of the Coat of Arms:

Department of: Education.

PROVINCE OF EASTERN CAPE

(b) Colour

- (i) Departments will be allowed to utilise one of four colours derived from the Coat of Arms for their naming structure, namely green, blue, red or brown.

(c) Language

- (i) Departments will be permitted to use translated versions of the brand in communication applications such as letterheads and the like.
- (ii) However, functional names or acronyms will remain in English.
- (iii) The descriptor (e.g. Department: Health) must be translated into the two official languages not used in the communication and positioned at the bottom of the communication.

Eastern Cape Department of Education

ISebe lezeMfundo eMpuma Koloni

IPHONDO LEMPUMA KOLONI

(d) Branding Organogram

- (i) The Corporate Image Branding contained herein is compulsory for all departments. Only the Provincial Coat of Arms may be displayed on provincial government communications, websites and intranet.

- (ii) Public entities such as the Eastern Cape Gambling Board must use their own identity only.
- (iii) The brands of sponsors or partners must be displayed in accordance with these guidelines as outlined under (e) below.
- (iv) Local authorities must use their own Coats of Arms only.
- (e) Co-branding
 - (i) The Coat of Arms may never be smaller than two-thirds of the other brand.
 - (ii) The Coat of Arms must always be placed on the right-hand side or directly below the other brand, except where the other brand is the National Coat of Arms, in which case the Coat of Arms must be placed on the left-hand side.
 - (iii) Where there are more than two brands to be displayed, the Coat of Arms must assume the position of priority within the group, except where one of the brands is the National Coat of Arms.

3. Buildings

(a) Installation, erection or casting of Coat of Arms

The Coat of Arms may be installed, erected or casted –

- (i) At the front or reception area of the building at a high visibility point for prominence.
- (ii) At the entry point of a national heritage sites.
- (iii) If on a public building it should be high enough to avoid it being handled constantly.
- (iv) When placed within easy reach it should be of a durable material installed in such a way that it is tamper proof.

(b) Replacement process

- (i) Arms that are part of a structure declared by the South African Heritage Resource Agency as a National Monument should only be removed with the permission of the Agency.
- (ii) Arms that are not part of a structure declared as a National Monument may be removed if it is desirable to do so without seeking permission from the Agency.
- (iii) The Coat of Arms should be creatively installed at buildings declared National Monuments to preserve the obsolete arms integral to the building where approval for removal of the old arms has not been granted.
- (iv) The remains of the obsolete arms removed from any building should be kept at local and national museums for history and education purposes.

(c). Copyright

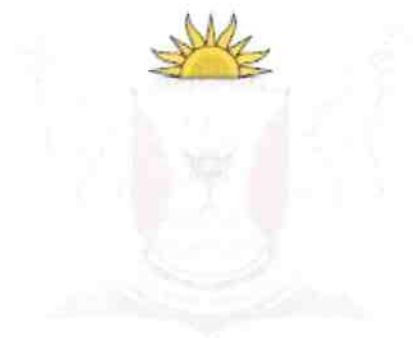
1. The Coat of Arms and its motto are the property of the Provincial Government.
2. Copy and reproduction rights of the Provincial Coat of Arms for commercial or other uses, is vested in the Provincial Government.

(d). Respect and dignity

1. The Provincial Coat of Arms, when used in official documents such as contracts, endorses authority and integrity and should not be utilised fraudulently.
2. Section 20 (1) of the Heraldic Act protects the Provincial Coat of Arms as a heraldic representation from being ridiculed or compromised as part of artistic expression in the public arena.

(e). Description (Elements of the Coat of Arms)

1. Rising Sun - The Rising Sun symbolizes the friendliness and positive attitude of the people of the Eastern Cape as well as representing the dawning of a new era and bright future of growth, development and prosperity.



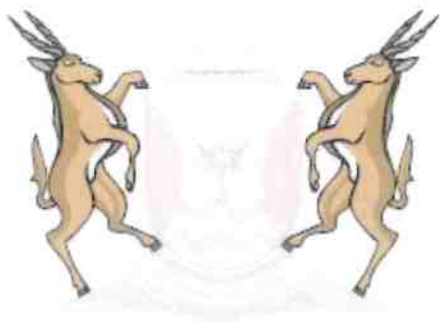
2. Leopard Skin Head Ring- The leopard skin head ring is a symbol of the prestige, power and heritage of the province. The Leopard is an animal of strength and is universally considered as a sign of authority.



3. The Shield - The Shield represents the protection and preservation of the Aloe - a symbol of strength due to its healing powers. The three flowers sprouting from a single stem represent the unity of the Eastern Cape's people. The blue Lines are heraldic symbols for the sea and represent the magnificent coastline of the province.



4. The Eland - The Eland Bull represents magnificence and was by far the most widespread of all larger antelope in the Eastern Cape. It is now being reintroduced into the province's nature reserves and game farms and is an important part of folklore, especially amongst the Khoi San who held it in high esteem.



- 5. The Motto** - "Development through Unity". The province strives to develop all its people in all facets of life, in the pursuit of sustainable prosperity through a united people moving together towards this goal.



Guidelines on usage of a Protocol Officer

Protocol Officers reside within Ministries of government and the Office of the Premier. Protocol is the Official form of procedure used in the affairs of state and diplomatic relations. Codifies and puts into practice the rules of ceremonial procedure and supervises the application of those rules. It is for this reason that the department is expected to seek advises when having departmental events and matters pertaining protocol from the Protocol officer as she/he is responsible to supervise the application of those rules.

Politics

- Precedence or Seniority
- Official Forms of Address
- National Symbols
- International Government Systems
- Gifts: Policy and Presentation

Etiquette

- Professionalism
- Telephone Etiquette
- Social Etiquette
- Entertaining at a Restaurant
- Table Etiquette

Function and Visit co-ordination

- Planning the Event
- Database and Guest List

- Invitations
- Room Layout and Table Plans

Sensitivity to Religions and Cultures

- Religions