

# WhatsApp Policy

(For School Noticeboard Group & Class Group)

## 1 Purpose of This Policy

This policy governs the use, conduct, consent requirements, and administrator responsibilities for all official WhatsApp groups used by the school.

These groups include:

1. School Noticeboard Group – for whole-school announcements and official communication.
2. Class Group – for class-specific communication handled by class reps and/or teachers.

*Participation in either group is voluntary and subject to the rules below.*

## 2 Consent & POPIA Compliance

In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA):

- By joining or remaining in any school WhatsApp group, you consent to your name and cell phone number being visible to other members.
- You may withdraw consent at any time by leaving the group.
- Administrators may request confirmation of consent periodically.

*Members may not share personal or sensitive information about any child, parent, or staff member without explicit consent.*

## 3 WhatsApp Groups Overview

### 3.1 A. School Noticeboard Group (School-Wide)

#### **Purpose:**

A one-way communication channel for official notices, reminders, alerts, school events, and administrative information.

Who may post:

- School leadership
- School administration
- Designated admin(s) only
- Parents **cannot** post in the school-wide group unless explicitly enabled for specific reasons.

Typical content includes:

- School announcements
- Term dates, schedule changes

- Important reminders
- Uniform or policy updates
- Urgent notices (e.g., power outages, safety alerts)

### 3.2 B. Class Group (Class-Specific)

#### **Purpose:**

Communication related to a specific class, grade, or group of learners.

Who may post:

- Class rep
- Teacher (if applicable)
- Parents — but only for class-related matters

Typical content includes:

- Class events and excursions
- Lost property within the class
- Birthday communication guidelines (if allowed)
- Class logistics

## 4 Rules for All Groups

These rules apply to both the School Noticeboard Group and Class Group unless stated otherwise.

### 4.1 School-Related Content Only

All posts must be relevant to school matters.

No advertising, personal messages, rumours, or unrelated content.

### 4.2 Respectful Communication

Members must:

- Communicate politely and respectfully
- Avoid inflammatory or offensive language
- Refrain from arguing or debating in group chats

### 4.3 Reasonable Posting Times

Avoid posting after 20:00 (8pm) unless urgent

Limit unnecessary replies (“thanks,” emojis, etc.)

### 4.4 Privacy & Confidentiality (POPIA)

Members may NOT:

- Share personal information about children, parents, or staff without consent
- Share photos or videos of children unless approved by the school and consent is obtained
- Discuss learner behaviour or disciplinary matters in the group

## 4.5 Accuracy and Legality

Members must not post:

- False or misleading information
- Defamatory statements
- Harmful or damaging content about any person
- Such actions may be unlawful under South African law.

## 4.6 Zero Tolerance for Hate Speech

**No** form of:

- discrimination
- harassment
- hate speech
- bullying

will be tolerated.

## 4.7 Handling Inappropriate Content

If inappropriate content is posted:

- Admins must remove it promptly
- Serious or repeated violations may lead to removal from the group
- The school may take further disciplinary action if required

## 5 Administrator Responsibilities & Authority

Admins may:

- Remove inappropriate content
- Remove members who repeatedly break rules
- Mute the group when necessary
- Deny posting access (for School Noticeboard Group)
- Request consent for POPIA compliance

Admins are not responsible for:

- Monitoring messages 24/7
- Mediating disputes
- Ensuring accuracy of posts by members

## 6 Contacting Teachers

WhatsApp groups are not for individual or private communication with teachers.

Parents must use official school channels for:

- academic queries

- concerns or complaints
- learner-specific issues

## 7 Liability Disclaimer

The school is not liable for:

- content posted by individual members
- misuse of personal information by members
- any harm caused by member-generated posts

Each member is responsible for their own conduct.