LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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Directorate	
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DATE	
BY	
SIGNATURE	

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

"Communication" - the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, signs or electronic transmission.

"Political Matters" – matters relating to, or dealing with the structure or affairs of government, politics, or the state.

"Administrative Matters" – matters relating to performance or management of business operations of the Limpopo Department of Education.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Effective communication by government entities is one of the provisions of the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). Chapter 2, Section 32 of the Constitution provides that "every one has the right to (a) access any information held by the state and (b) any information that is held by another person which is required for the exercise or protection of any rights". To give effect to this constitutional right in government departments, Public Service Regulation (PSR) Part 1 (H.4) of Chapter 1 (PRS/1/1/1H4) requires that Heads of Departments (HOD) must establish a policy on how employees in their department will communicate with the printed or other public media. In addition, the Public Access to Information Act obliges government to provide the public with information related to government services with high levels of transparency, accountability and thereby access service and improve their lives. In this manner, the department's responsibility for communication is threefold. The department must communicate effectively with its employees or internal clients, its stakeholders in general, and its external clients who are recipients of the services it provides. Service delivery begins from within. If communication within the department is not effective, the external communication will be compromised. But communication here is not a one-sided process of providing information to clients and stakeholders. Communication as constitutionally and legally mandated for departments must be a two-way process, where the department, as a whole, is able to provide information as well as solicit and receive information from clients and stakeholders to improve its service delivery.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Effective communication to clients and stakeholders is one of the core responsibilities of the department, since the effectiveness of service delivery depends on the manner in which its communication programme is conducted. But if communication in the department must be effective, it cannot be ad hoc, unplanned, uncontrolled or without strategic guidance. A policy framework is therefore necessary in order to ensure that the best use is made of communication instruments and processes in order to enhance the overall performance of the department.

3. PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines for effective and efficient communication to the department's various target audiences so that all could be well empowered and informed about departmental activities, have the opportunity to contribute and share ideas and are guided in the manner in which communication should be handled and managed.

4. OBJECTIVES

To communicate information to the public and the media in a clear, consistent and responsible manner.

To provide for the effective management of the flow of information within the department.

To establish delegations which authorize individuals to communicate with the media.

To keep the public informed in respect to the policies, programmes and major initiatives of government.

To monitor media coverage of matters which are within the area of competence of the department, and to ensure corrective measures are initiated in response.

To ensure that proper systems, structures and tools are in place in order to promote effective communication within the department.

To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities in relation to the standards, requirements and protocols set by the department.

To ensure that the department's website is effectively managed and used.

To ensure that the department's newsletter is effectively managed and used as a communication tool for all departmental audiences.

To create an overall understanding in the department that communication is a shared responsibility which is undertaken by all departmental officials and stakeholders.

5. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Access to Information:
All officials, stakeholders and clients must have access to information which can advance their welfare and preserve and protect their rights.

Access to Management to Share Ideas and Concerns:

All clients, staff and stakeholders must have access to management to share ideas, express concerns or make complaints.

Rights to Information to Make Informed Choices:
All officials, clients and stakeholders must have access to information in order to make informed choices.

Transparency:
There will be transparency in the gathering, compilation and use of information in executing the communication programme.

Accountability:
All participants in the communication programme must take responsibility for their actions and will be held accountable for all information provided or used. The department will take full responsibility for the information it communicates.

Common Departmental Position on Public Matters:
The department must take a common view and position on matters that are communicated to the public. Public dissent on departmental matters must be avoided at all costs.

Communication as a Collective Responsibility:
Communication is the responsibility of all officials and stakeholders in the department. Each must ensure accurate and responsible communication.

Internal Stakeholders as the Core of Communication Programme:
Communication within the department is seen as fundamental to its overall effectiveness and to the effectiveness of the communication programme in general.

Batho Pele:
The principles of Batho Pele are observed in all manner of departmental communication.

Proactive and Responsive:
The department must be alert, timely and responsive to current circumstances in administering its communication programme. In addition, the department must be proactive, forthright and courageous in addressing communication issues.

Courtesy:
While accuracy and integrity is of the highest importance, the department's staff must exhibit a high level of courtesy in handling communication engagements.

Confidentiality:
In administering its function, the communication function in the department shall fully respect the confidentiality of others.

Empowerment and Improving the Welfare of People:

In all cases, the communication programme should seek to build and empower people and not compromise or stifle their individual interest.

Respect and Professionalism:
All associated with the communication programme shall show respect and professionalism in undertaking their responsibilities.

The Importance of Honouring Timelines:
All timelines will be honoured so that the subject matter communicated will always be relevant, useful and applicable to the challenges faced.

6. APPLICABILITY

The policy is applicable to all officials in the Limpopo Department of Education and to all departmental stakeholders who may participate in the communication programme of the department from time to time.

7. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- *The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) Chapter 2 Section 32*
- *Public Service Regulations Part 1 (H.4) Chapter 1 (PRS/1/1/H.4).*
- *Public Access to Information Act*

8. POLICY PROVISIONS

In order to promote effective communication in the department, a policy framework has been established to govern communication activities. The policy framework addresses 10 critical areas for the effective and efficient administration of communication. These are as follows:

1. *Communications Management*
2. *External Communication*
3. *Internal Communication*
4. *Crisis Communication*
5. *Internet*
6. *Website Management*
7. *Intranet*
8. *Departmental Newsletter*
9. *Call Centre*
10. *Communication Reporting and Service Standards*

Communications Management:
The communications function in the department will be managed in a manner so as to ensure that the department accrues maximum benefit from its communications initiatives, from the input of its clients and stakeholders and from the use of appropriate tools and

technology. In this regard, the requirements outlined below will be part of the communications management strategy.

A communications forum will be established in the department. The forum will be constituted of representatives from the following directorates: the Communications Directorate, the Transformation Unit; the HR and Curriculum Branches; the Office of the CFO; and EMIS. The Chief Information Officer and Media Liaison Officer will also be members of the communications forum.

the forum will be chaired by a representative of the communications directorate.

The responsibilities of the communications forum will include: planning and strategy development; responding to crisis situations; ensuring effective engagement with clients (internal and external) and stakeholders; anticipating and preparing for public communication issues and events; and among others developing communication standards and monitoring performance against these standards.

A five year communication strategy and plan will be developed and will be updated annually. Annual reports will be made on the implementation of the communication plan.

Communication standards will be developed and will be approved by the departmental communication forum. The performance of the communication function will be assessed against these standards.

Annual market surveys will be conducted among the department's clients (internal and external) and stakeholders. These surveys will address all key aspects of the department's work and timely feedback will be provided to the respective directorates. Where serious issues or gaps arise in service delivery, as perceived by the department's clients and stakeholders, a corrective plan of action will be developed, and its implementation will be monitored until the perceived issues are resolved.

The communication programmes and activities of the department will be managed by the Chief Directorate: Communication Services. The responsibilities of the Communications Services Chief Directorate are as follows:

Chair and manage the department communications forum and thereby ensure a communication plan and strategy is developed, communication standards are prepared and updated, annual market surveys are conducted and annual reports are written on accomplishments under the communication plan and strategy.

Coordinate an early warning system in order to anticipate and respond effectively to communication issues which may arise.
Provide leadership, guidance and support in responding to media matters.

Write opinion pieces, letters to the editor and other means or avenues of communicating with the public on matters that are important in preserving the positive image of the department.

Publish a quarterly newsletter and periodic information briefs in order to keep clients and stakeholders of the department informed about plans, programmes and activities.

In collaboration with other relevant units, establish and maintain an intranet facility in order to enhance internal communication.

Prepare, edit and convey management information to all staff by means of information sharing sessions, bulletins, pamphlets, posters, newsletters, meetings, videos and notice boards/electronic boards.

Set up the intranet and tele/video conferencing facility.

Ensure that employees receive and respond to communications media.

Establish and head editorial committee, write, edit and do layout and design for outsourced printing of the above publications.

Arrange open days and relationship building initiatives.

Establish a photographic library.

Convene the editorial committee of the department's newsletter and other magazines.

Convey DPSA and other correspondence such as circulars to all staff.

Update and manage the website

Set up and manage the contact and information centre i.e. Call Centre.

Ensure that internal communication forms part of strategic planning.

External Communication

External communication is concerned with information sharing with the public in relation to progress made in planning, executing and reporting on outcomes related to the department's mandate. It seeks to empower citizens about the department's mandate. It seeks to empower citizens about the department's programme of action and seeks to encourage the participation of communities in managing the delivery of educational services. External communication seeks not only to inform the public and encourage public participation, but to nurture and maintain a positive public image of the department and encourage support for the initiatives and programmes it undertakes.

Modes of External Communication: In its programme of external communication, the department will employ all means possible to ensure that it reaches all its clients and stakeholders and audiences. In doing so, multiple forms of communication are used. These will include, but are not limited to:

(a) MECs Roadshows
(b) Izimbizos and Community Forums
(c) Radio slots
(d) Infomercials
(e) Media releases and statements
(f) Media briefings and networking sessions
(g) Opinion pieces
(h) Human resource recruitment advertisements
(i) Advertisement on the invitation of tenders and public comments on policies, legislation and other departmental activities
(j) Project launches and marketing advertisements
(k) Workshops
(l) Policy related issues
(m) Departmental corporate identify

In addition to these the department will maintain a website, a call centre and an internal system to manage compliments, suggestions and complaints from the public.

Communication with the Media: Because use of the public media is the most common and effective means of communication and because the public media is effective in influencing public perceptions, the following guidelines are provided regarding communication with the media.

(a) An employee shall not release official information to the public unless he or she has the necessary authority (Public Service Regulation 1/11/E).

(b) An employee shall not disclose any official information for personal gain or the gain of others (Public Service Regulations 2/C5.4).

(c) An employee shall not in his or her capacity irresponsibly criticize government policy at a public gathering or in a publication or in the printed or other media (Public Service Regulations 1/1/H.6).

(d) An employee shall honour the confidentiality of matters, documents and discussions, classified or implied as being confidential or secret.

(e) Any inquiries by the public/media relating to the Department of Education's activities shall be directed to the Chief Information Officer as a first line of entry.

(f) *The Chief Information Officer should coordinate any information that needs to be communicated to the media by the department in consultation with the MEC's spokesperson.*

(g) *Comment to the media on issues pertaining to the Office of the MEC shall be limited to the MEC's Spokesperson. The Chief Information Officer shall comment on all issues relating to the department. He or she will also provide off and on record comments on issues relating to the department and may also, in consultation with the MEC's Spokesperson, comment on matters relating to the MEC.*

(h) *The Chief Directorate: Communication Services shall provide ongoing media analysis and provide such to the Office of the MEC and Senior Management.*

(i) *Only the MEC, the HOD, the Chief Information Officer and the MEC's Spokesperson can comment on policy statements and politically related issues.*

Persons Designated to Communicate with the Media:

(a) Member of the Executive Council (MEC)
The MEC is the principal communicator. He/she can communicate all political and policy issues related to the Limpopo Department of Education. The MEC may delegate this responsibility to the HOD.

(b) Head of Department (HOD)
The HOD is the main spokesperson for administrative and financial management matters of the Limpopo Department of Education.

(c) Chief Information Officer
The Chief Information Officer will communicate matters as delegated by the MEC or HOD.

(d) MEC's Spokesperson (Media Liaison Officer)
The MEC's Spokesperson (Media Liaison Officer) will communicate matters to the media as delegated by the MEC or HOD.

(e) Senior Management
The Senior Manager has a responsibility and accompanying authority to prepare responses to media issues and to respond as delegated by the HOD.

(f) Staff in the Chief Information Office SBU

Staff in the Chief Information Office will not generally respond directly to the media. Staff will attend to communication issues in their area of responsibility and will prepare briefs to submit to the Chief Information Officer.

(g) The Senior Manager: Communication Services
The Senior Manager: Communication Services will render support in this regard by monitoring and developing responses for key media matters.

(h) Departmental Staff

The Effectiveness of External Communication: The effectiveness of external communication will be assessed against (a) the communication standards set by the department communication forum and (b) the market surveys to be conducted annually.

Internal Communication

The role of internal communication is to keep employees informed about the plans, activities and accomplishments of the department, generally, and of the respective business units. This will include information about the goals and business priorities of various units or institutions, of developments, changes or new initiatives affecting their work. Internal communication will be used as a vehicle for creating a vibrant corporate culture, and for building a sense of community and a sense of collective responsibility among departmental officials.

Internal Communication Plan and Strategy: A strategy and plan will be developed for internal communication as part of the overall communication plan and strategy of the department.

While the Communications Services Chief Directorate will manage a comprehensive programme of internal communications in the department, effective internal communication will depend on the manner in which internal communication is managed by senior managers within their respective components. In this regard, the following is required within directorates:

(a) *Every directorate should convene a meeting at least once per month as a forum for internal communication among staff in the directorate. At this meeting, relevant issues should be documented, and if pertinent to the overall communication plans and programmes of the department, should be forwarded to the Chief Communications Officer.*

(b) *Directorates should, on an ongoing basis, identify information which is of importance to the department's communication programme. Such issues should be forwarded to the Chief Information Officer.*

Internal Communication Activities: Among the internal communication activities to be coordinated by the Communications Service Chief Directorate are the following:

(a) *Prepare, edit and convey management information to all staff by means of information sharing sessions, bulletins, pamphlets, posters, newsletters, meetings, videos and notice boards/electronic boards.*

(b) *Set up the intranet and tele/video conferencing facility.*

(c) *Ensure that employees receive and respond to communications media.*

(d) *Establish and head editorial committee, write, edit and do layout and design for outsourced printing of the above publications.*

(e) *Arrange open days and relationship building initiatives.*

(f) *Establish a photographic library.*

(g) *Convene the editorial committee of the department's newsletter and other magazines.*

(h) *Convey DPSA and other correspondence such as circulars to all staff.*

(i) *Update and manage the website.*

(j) *Set up and manage the contact and information centre i.e. Call Centre.*

(k) *Ensure that internal communication forms part of strategic planning.*

Each directorate, as a result of its monthly communication meetings, will identify matters to be raised at the department's communication forum. Such matters will be communicated in writing through the directorate's representative on the communication forum.

Crisis Communication

Departmental crises should be managed in a manner that is responsible, compliant with policy and protective of the overall image and credibility of the department. In this regard, the Communications Services Chief Directorate must play an important role in ensuring that communication in times of crises adheres to the principles and guidelines set forth in this policy.

There is a wide variety of crises which could occur which may be a threat to the welfare or security of staff, or which may, in some manner, disrupt the normal and routine conduct of business by the department. These crises will include national catastrophic events, damages of prospective damage caused by the force of nature, sudden death of a key official, terrorist threat or acts of violence; major accident at an educational facility causing injury or death; labour unrest or the lack of essential resources or utilities which may pose imminent danger to departmental staff or learners. Response to each of such crisis

situations must be pre-planned, and the implications and responsibilities in respect to communication must be clear.

The department should establish a crisis management committee with a key role to be played by the committee or by the Communications Services Chief Directorate and the Chief Information Officer.

The department should prepare a crisis management plan which should address the response requirements for the different types of crises which may occur. The communication strategy should be included as one aspect of the crisis management plan.

In the event of a crisis, the crisis management committee should meet as soon as possible and the MEC, HOD, CIO, MEC's Spokesperson and a representative of the legal section, will constitute part of the crisis response team, and will decide on the appropriate communication strategy to employ.

All major projects in the department should have a clear contingency plan for crisis communication.

Internet

Internet facilities are available in the department for the purpose of enhancing the ability of employees to undertake their responsibilities. In this respect, internet facilities should be used solely for work related purposes. The guidelines provided below govern the applications and use of internet facilities.

All employees at or above the rank of Assistant Director or Deputy CES shall have access to the internet from a computer terminal available in their respective offices. All other employees shall have access to strategically placed open internet terminals to be made available within the department. The ICT unit shall develop and manage protocols for using open internet terminals.

The department will routinely monitor the use of internet facilities in order to ensure appropriate and efficient use. The ICT unit shall develop and enforce measures to assure proper use of these facilities.

Internet facilities shall not be used for non work related purposes.

Employees who use internet facilities for non work related purposes shall be subject to disciplinary action, as appropriate, under the disciplinary code of the department.

Where necessary, convenient and appropriate; and with the approval of an immediate supervisor above the rank of senior manager, the ICT unit is permitted to grant temporary access to internet facilities at the respective workstation to undertake short term work related assignments. The ICT unit will develop the necessary forms and protocols to give effect to this responsibility.

Website Management

The department's website is public and is made available for the use of all clients and stakeholders of the department – both internal and external clients and to all individuals internally who may benefit from the department's activities. The purpose of the website is to communicate to the public all matters related to the department's plans, activities and achievements. The following guidelines are provided to govern the management and use of the website:

The design, development and technical maintenance of the website will be the responsibility of the ICT unit. In this respect, the ICT unit will undertake responsibility for:

The development of guidelines for the most effective use of the website. This will include access, the technical and ICT aspects related to the preparation of content.

The preparation and management of a website maintenance schedule, which will include a schedule and protocols for maintaining the currency of website information.

The conduct of workshops and training sessions on engagement with the department's website.

The internal communications/publications unit within the Chief Directorate: Communication Services shall be responsible for the content to be uploaded to the department's website. The guidelines provided below represent a minimum set of requirements for content development and management of the website.

The website and its content should be professional, should observe high ethical principles with content that is relevant, accurate and of high quality in terms of language and presentation. In this respect, the website should enhance the image of the department in South Africa and all over the world.

The communications unit shall establish and manage a website content development team. This team should have representation from each chief directorate.

A monthly report shall be developed by the website management team providing details on the utilization and performance of the website by the public and identifying any problems or issues to be resolved, or any gaps in the design of the website to be filled.

All content to be placed on the website should be pre-authorized by the respective SGM who shall ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the information and who shall ensure that the content conforms to the principles and guidelines outlined in this policy.

English language (UK) would be used in all content placed on the internet.

The language used on the website should be formal, non-racial and non- sexist.

The website should be updated regularly, at least weekly by the webmaster located in the Communications Chief Directorate. Such updates shall be in compliance with the protocols developed by the ICT unit.

Content to be loaded on the website should be signed off by the CIO or appropriately delegated official prior to being placed under thorough editing and other quality control procedures.

All senior management (SMS) should supply relevant information about their directorates and provide one contact person for the website content development team.

All official statements and speeches of the MEC shall be promptly placed on the website. The spokesperson / MLO should ensure that this content is supplied to the website manager responsible on a timely basis.

Placing of unauthorized content on the website is not allowed and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Any violations observed on the website, or any issues or concerns which arise in respect to the use of the website should be communicated to the Chief Information Officer. Protocols will be put in place to document and track the resolution of these violations, issues or concerns.

Intranet

The intranet will be used as an internal communication tool of the department. It will be the avenue through which information is shared, notices posted, plans made public and the activities and achievements of individual directorates communicated to the department as a whole. The intranet will be used to communicate and update policies, solicit information from staff to enhance customer care and to generally build a culture of information and knowledge development and use in the department. The intranet will also include a file management and tracking system in order to improve the efficiency of administrative action.

The ICT unit is responsible for the design, development and technical maintenance of the intranet. Here, the ICT unit will employ measures to ensure that the intranet is effectively managed and used.

The content to be posted in the intranet will be managed by the Communications / Publications Unit. This unit will ensure that the content posted on the intranet is relevant, timely, well prepared and in compliance with the principles and requirements set forth in this policy.

The website content development team will also manage the content to be posted on the intranet.

Senior managers will take responsibility for the relevance, timelines and quality of content submitted to their units.

All staff shall have access to the intranet.

The ICT unit will set up security procedures for accessing the system and for preserving the integrity of information posted.

Each directorate will be advised and trained on the manner in which it can maximize the use of the intranet. Such advice and training will be given by the Communications / Publications Unit in collaboration with the ICT unit of the department.

Standards and measures of performance will be established as a basis for reporting annually on the use, performance and impact of the intranet.

Departmental Newsletter

The purpose of the departmental newsletter is to educate and inform clients, stakeholders and the public in general about key programmes, plans, activities, accomplishments and events of the department.

The management and publication of the newsletter will be the responsibility of the Communications / Publications Unit of the Chief Directorate of Communication Services.

An editorial board or committee will be established for the publication of the newsletter. The editorial board will be constituted of 6 people, and will be chaired by the CIO.

The editorial board should include representatives from the provincial offices, from districts and from selected institutions. The editorial board may also include stakeholder representatives from outside the department.

The editorial board shall meet quarterly.

The departmental newsletter shall be published quarterly.

All articles for publication must be submitted 2 months before the publication of the newsletter in the respective quarter.

A final draft of the newsletter must be approved by the SGM: Corporate Services before printing and publication.

The newsletter will adhere to a set of editorial principles in order to enhance its quality and professionalism. The editorial principles are noted below.

All articles are written for the official newsletter of the department gathered from departmental events and activities.

Each newsletter is to contain a disclaimer as to the contents, indicating that the news contained therein does not necessarily represent the view of opinion of the department but rather of the editor(s) or contributor(s).

Articles will seek to promote and market programmes of the department.

The content and the articles in the newsletter should seek to advance the strategic goals and the overall communications strategies of the department.

The newsletter will be accurate and will establish the truth of what has happened. Accuracy is seen as more important than speed and it is often no more than a question of getting the facts right.

Articles will be presented by disclosing all the essential facts. Facts and issues will not be exaggerated or sensationalized.

Interviews will always be well-informed and prepared.

The newsletter will target articles to tie in with regularly scheduled events.

The newsletter will be fair, open minded, gender-sensitive and evenhanded in its approach.

The newsletter will seek to adhere to well accepted standards of journalism so as to enhance its overall quality and professionalism. These standards are noted below.

Thematic: *as the newsletter of the department, each item should be relevant to education.*

***The Right Angle:** a story is appealing if it has an easily identifiable angle. Angles include such things as launching of new schools, a new twist on a familiar theme, an unusual or unexpected development or activity.*

***Proper Language:** we will use the language of the United Kingdom. First person accounts are generally, but not always, discouraged, it depends on the article in question.*

***Originality:** stories should be original and clearly state the facts. The newsletter needs to be creative about the way it handles recurring stories. It helps to identify what's unique about a story each time its put forward.*

***Image Impact:** when thinking about whether a story is suitable for the newsletter, think also about its image potential.*

Balance: each issue should attempt to balance contributions and discussions   on various themes such as:

- *Local content*
- *Rural content / local content*
- *Research*
- *Profiles*
- *Internal news*
- *Contributions from within the department.*

General writing guidelines are provided in order to guide staff and stakeholders in the preparation of articles. The following requirements should be noted.

Use active voice wherever possible.

Avoid needless duplication. Ask yourself whether each sentence and   paragraph adds to the article or simply duplicates a point already made.

Use specific examples to illustrate your point. In longer feature articles,   consider interviewing other sources and using pointed quotes.

Write down the purpose of your article and what you hope the reader will gain from it.

Avoid footnotes in your manuscripts.

Avoid plagiarism, it is unethical (always acknowledge the source).

Avoid flowery language.

Every article or story will have a "By Line" (short phrase or paragraph that   indicates the name of the author of an article in books, magazines,   newspapers, newsletters, or other publications. In some cases, by lines may   be used to give credit for photographs or illustrations).

Words, other than English will be written in "italics".

When writing, use the inverted pyramid style comprising the five Ws and one H   (what, where, who, when, why and how).

The introduction must always be brief and logical – strictly less than 30 words.

Every sentence must contain a verb. Preferably use strong active verbs,   unless you specifically need to use the passive voice.

Use short sentences and simple, familiar language that can be understood by everybody.

Avoid using contractions in official and formal writing.

Always double check your work for correct spelling and punctuation.

In writing, all publications should be fair, honest and considerate.

There must be a powerful concluding paragraph that draws together the main ideas.

Adhere to the corporate identify manual.

Call Centre

The Call Centre is a communication hub of the department, and is intended to maintain effective customer care, enhance service delivery responsiveness and streamline client contact and engagement. The Call Centre is intended to serve clients and stakeholders of the department. In doing so, it responds to the concerns and inquiries of clients, creates a bridge between clients and service delivery points in the department and ensures that the department constantly adapts to service delivery requirements.

Management: The Call Centre is managed by the Communication Services Chief Directorate. In the management of the Call Centre, the following instruments must be in place:

Client contact forms, guidelines and logbooks so as to ensure that detailed documentation exists on Call Centre activities and outcomes.

Referral forms and protocols so as to ensure that enquiries and issues are properly followed up

Performance standards and an effective tracking system so as to ensure that matters are addressed promptly

Quarterly reporting on Call Centre activity and performance against standards.

Collaboration: The Communication Services Chief Directorate will work collaboratively with the Transformation Services Unit in the management of the Call Centre.

Capacity Development: every effort will be made to ensure that staff at the Call Centre are appropriately trained and informed about the department and its activities to undertake their responsibilities. Such training should include:
Knowledge and information about the department and its activities.

Customer care in terms of the professional manner in which all customers are handled.

Administrative procedures in terms of the requirements for processing and tracking customer requests and concerns.

Communication Reporting and Service Standards

The communication function is critical to the overall performance of the department. In order to enhance and preserve the effectiveness of communication within the department, the Chief Directorate will seek to establish measures and procedures to ensure effective performance. In this regard, the following guidelines are to be observed.

Service Standards: A comprehensive set of service standards and performance indictors will be developed for the communication function.

Reporting: The Communication Services Chief Directorate will submit quarterly reports on the performance of the communication function.

All reporting will be undertaken in terms of the department's communication plan and service standards.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Member of Executive Council (MEC)
The MEC is the principal communicator. He/she can communicate all political and policy issues related to the Limpopo Department of Education. The MEC may also delegate this responsibility to the HOD.

Head of Department (HOD)
The HOD is the main spokesperson for administrative and financial management matters in the Limpopo Department of Education.

- *Communicate all financial issues that have implications on the Office of the MEC.*
- *Delegate responsibility to appropriate line functionaries in cases where any information is required on other sections' activities.*

Chief Information Officer
The Chief Information Officer will communicate matters as designated by the MEC or HOD.

- *Prepare and respond to media inquiries as delegated by the MEC and HOD.*
- *Attend and advise on routine communication issues within the department's responsibility.*
- *Oversee and advise on all media liaison responsibilities of the department.*
- *Develop strategies and policies.*
- *Participate in Inter-Government Relations Forums (IGR), e.g. Government Communicators Forum, Heads of Communication Forum, etc.*
- *Ensure the monitoring of media and other sources and process the information for purposes of devising messages and strategies for the MEC.*
- *Be the main spokesperson during crisis communication.*

MEC's Spokesperson (Media Liaison Officer)

The MEC's Spokesperson (Media Liaison Officer) will communicate matters to the media as delegated by the MEC or HOD.

- *Ensure that media releases/statements aligned to government policies are prepared and facts verified by the responsible Business Units, with the support from the Chief Directorate: Communications Services before being released to the media.*
- *Contribute to the determination of the MEC's diary taking into account the communication programme.*
- *Assist in the development and implementation of relevant campaigns for the MEC and department.*
- *Coordinate speech writing and editing for the MEC.*
- *Coordinate all media inquiries to and from the Office of the MEC.*

Senior Management

Senior management has a responsibility and accompanying authority to prepare responses to media issues and to respond as delegated by the HOD.

- *Prepare and respond to the media issues as delegated by the HOD.*
- *Undertake routine communication responsibilities in the form of meetings with staff.*
- *Ensure that the information about Business Units is available on the website/intranet/newsletter.*
- *Prepare and respond to media issues as delegated by the HOD via the Chief Information Officer.*

Staff in the Chief Information Office Business Unit

Staff in the Chief Information Office Business Unit will not generally respond directly to the media. Staff will attend to communication issues in their area of responsibility and will prepare briefs to submit to the Chief Information Officer.

- *Refer all media inquiries to the Chief Information Officer (CIO).*

- *Attend to communication issues within their areas of responsibility as directed by the CIO.*
- *Ensure that the departmental programmes, activities and services are communicated through print and electronic media.*
- *Execute all media liaison functions as advised and recommended by the MEC, HOD and CIO.*
- *Keep the Office of the MEC and the department abreast of latest media reports/trends pertaining to their scope of work.*

Senior Manager: Communication Services

The Senior Manager: Communication Services will render support in this regard by monitoring and development of responses for key media matters.

- *Coordinate the early warning/alert system in which reports pertaining to the functional activities of the department are identified and brought to the attention of the MEC, HOD, CIO and Management as soon as possible after publication of broadcasting.*

- *Reports identified in the above process that warrant priority attention, will be brought to the attention of the HOD and CIO for corrective action to take place.*

- *May write opinion pieces, letters to the editor in their official or personal capacity but in line with the policy.*

Departmental Staff

- *Keep informed about departmental activities and initiatives through use of departmental communication instruments.*
- *Take responsibility for enhancing communication in the department.*
- *Provide input and express concerns as necessary.*

10. DELEGATIONS

The responsibility for communication is divided along two distinct areas for delegation – one is communication on matters that are defined as "political" or policy matters, and the other is communication on matters that are defined as "administrative". On political and policy matters, the responsibility is that of the MEC and communication responsibility is sometimes delegated to the MEC's Spokesperson (Media Liaison Officer). On administrative matters, the responsibility is that of the HOD, and may be sometimes delegated to the Chief Information Officer or Senior Manager: Communication Services. The Senior Manager: Communication Services will plan, manage and administer a comprehensive communications programme for the department

11. IMPLEMENTING AGENTS AND ROLE PLAYERS

There is a wide range of implementing agents and role players for the completion of the communications policy. These will include internal and external clients and stakeholders. Each of the agents and role players are noted below with a brief summary of the roles they may plan.

Managers in the Department: Ensure quality, accuracy, relevance and timelines of information submitted for consideration by the communication taskforce.

Staff within the Department: Submit information and articles for publication; keep abreast of communication activities and participate as necessary, use knowledge and information mad available through the vehicles of communication in the department.

External Stakeholders: Submit information as necessary read and engage with information made available, become active participants in the communication process in forging a healthy culture of knowledge and information development and use.

12. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

Administrative processes are associated with all aspects of the communication function. They include the following.

Communication planning.

Communication reporting.

The submission and review of information of the newsletter.

Management of the Call Centre, particularly the receipt, processing and tracking of the enquiries and concerns from clients.

13. FORMS

None

14. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this policy is …………..

15. SIGNATURE OF APPROVING AUTHORITY