LEARNER
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

We all know that you want to use **social media networks** (hopefully not during school time, unless during break or when you are given permission to do 😊).

This Social Media Policy's ("Policy") aim is to guide you as a Learner of El Shaddai Christian School on your use of social media networks (for both during and after school hours).

This Policy has been created to encourage the *responsible use* of social media.

2. WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS POLICY?

El Shaddai Christian School ("**we**", "**us**", "**our**", "**the School**", "**ESCS**") allows for an open and expressive environment, and respects every individual's right to freedom of speech.

This Policy is drafted as a friendly reminder to all ESCS Learners that as Christ followers, we eagerly embrace our digital citizenship responsibilities and to guide you in your social media use so that such use is lawful, does not cause harm and does not infringe on other peoples' rights (e.g. their rights to reputation, dignity and privacy).

This Policy explains how El Shaddai Learners should use social media *safely and effectively*.

3. TO WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY?

3.1. This Policy applies to all ESCS Learners ("**Learner(s)**", "**you**"), who use social media for School or personal related reasons.

4. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES?

4.1. If you use your personal social media account with reference to the School or use your personal social media account for personal communication, you will be responsible for everything that you comment on, post and/or what is posted on your account.

4.2. The following people have *key responsibilities*:

4.2.1. The **Social Media Manager** is responsible for ensuring that the School uses social media safely, appropriately and in line with the ESCS's objectives. If you need assistance or have any questions regarding social media use please make an appointment to speak to the Social Media Manager. The Social media manager is: Mrs Vorster and may be contacted on marketing@escs.org.za / vorsterm@escs.org.za.

4.2.2. The responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this Policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks lies with the **Social Media Manager** who will review this Policy to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

4.2.3. **All Learner's** have the responsibility to use social media according to this Policy.

5. WHAT ARE THE APPLICABLE LAWS?

5.1. There are plenty of laws and legal rules applicable to the use of social media. We don't want to bore you with the nitty gritty, however, if you are interested and would like to find out more about what law is applicable, please contact the School's Social Media Manager who will give you more information on this.

5.2. NOTE: that possible consequences can include legal action and/or criminal offences. If you are uncertain about a social media post, always first check with the Social Media Manager.

6. GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES

6.1. THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1.1. ESCS knows and recognises that social media offers a platform for the School to stay connected with you as a Learner and that connections help build the School's profile online.

6.1.2. When used appropriately, social media can be an excellent way for Learners to make useful connections, share ideas and shape discussions.

6.1.3. The School therefore encourages you to use social media to support the School's goals and objectives.

6.2. THE VALUE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

6.2.1. Social media is a tool that can be used to add value as it:

6.2.1.1. is a means for you to interact and communicate with other Learners and Staff or coaches at the School;

6.2.1.2. allows the School to receive feedback from you on certain School activities/ events; and

6.2.1.3. By posting about the School, you can help to **build the School's profile** online.

7. BASIC ADVICE AND GUIDELINES

We do not want to tell you what to do, however, we encourage each Learner at ESCS to read the below **basic advice and guidelines** and practise what is stated when using your personal or the School's social media accounts.

Regardless of which social media network you are using, or whether you are using the School's (with permission from the Social Media Manager, see below) or your own personal social media account during School time or not, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

7.1. Remember, assumptions can be made from viewing your social media account that link you to the School, even if you do not list El Shaddai Christian School as the School that you attend or even if you do not post about the School (for example by most of your friends attending the School, so it is likely that you are a student at the School or assumptions that can be made from viewing content regarding you on another social media account such as being "tagged" in a School photograph by a friend or by the School). This means that these social media guidelines apply **24 hours a day, 7 days a week (including School holidays)**, as all Learners of the School act as representatives of the School at all times.

7.2. **Know the social network.** You should spend time becoming familiar with the social media network before contributing. It's important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates or communicating using the social network. If you need assistance with finding out more about a certain social media site or understanding its terms and conditions please make an appointment to speak to the Social Media Manager.

7.3. **If unsure, don't post it.** Be cautious when posting on social media. If you feel an update or message might cause someone to complain or be offended, or be otherwise unsuitable in terms of the School's moral values and ethos, you should **not** post it. You should always consult the Social Media Manager for advice. It is important to remember that content on social media is "published" content from the moment one

other person has seen the content on a social media networking site or platform (including WhatsApp). This means that you are responsible for it, the same as a journalist who puts a headline on the front page of the newspaper.

7.3.1. **How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself.** Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity, or by creating a fictional persona which can be linked back to you.

7.3.2. **Be thoughtful and polite.** Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online. You should adopt the same level of courtesy and respect used when communicating in person with someone. You should also observe the moral values and ethos projected by the School in your use of social media.

7.3.3. **Look out for security threats.** You should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are also used to distribute spam and malware. If something feels or looks suspicious, please contact the Social Media Manager immediately for assistance and help.

7.3.4. **Do not share your password** with anyone else. It is also advisable to change your passwords regularly to protect your privacy.

7.3.5. **Keep personal use for breaks and after School.** You should exercise restraint in how much personal use of your own social media accounts you make during School hours. Use of social media is prohibited during School time and you should only use social media for personal use during a School break and/or after School.

7.3.6. **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and Learner issues. You should address your School related questions and/or issues via the most appropriate channel, i.e. by speaking to a member of staff, teacher or coach.

7.3.7. **Don't escalate things.** It's easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. You should always take the time to think before responding, and hold back if you are in any doubt at all.

7.3.8. **Chain of publication**. Remember that even if you did not create the content, in terms of the law, you are responsible for any content that you retweet, share, like or are tagged in on social media. Any comments appearing on your posts are also your responsibility, and if you are in a WhatsApp Group all of the content on that group is your responsibility (not just the responsibility of the person who put it there).

7.3.9. **Failure to mention the name of the School or a certain individual does not remove liability** for content that is damaging to the School and/or others. You do not have to mention a name in order to have identified someone for the purpose of the offence of defamation or crimen injuria (infringement of dignity). Similarly, you do not have to mention the name of the School for the content to be defamatory.

8. WHAT TO DO IF YOU USE THE SCHOOL'S SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT?

This section of the Policy covers the use of social media accounts owned and run by the School.

8.1. AUTHORISED USERS

8.1.1. If you want to use the School's social media account or post on behalf of the School you need to get **authorisation**. Authorisation can be obtained from the Social Media Manager or Head of the School.

8.2. CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

8.2.1. New social media accounts in the School's name **may not** be created by any Learner. Only Staff members, the Head of the School or the Social Media Manager may create social media accounts in the School's name.

8.3. INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT AND USES

8.3.1. The School's social media accounts **must not** be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or to take part in any activities that could bring the School into disrepute.

8.3.2. When posting anything in relation to the School or on one of the Schools social media accounts, you should **always** review the content (at least three times). When in doubt consult the School's Social Media Manager.

9. GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA RULES

9.1. WHEN CAN I USE MY PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT:

9.1.1. Use of social media accounts for non-School purposes is restricted to non-School times, such as breaks and during lunch or after School.

9.1.2. You are **not permitted**, during School hours or by means of School computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems to use your own social media, unless instructed by a teacher/coach or member of staff.

9.2. TALKING ABOUT THE EL SHADDAI CHRISTIAN SCHOOL:

9.2.1. You may not express opinions on the School's behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by the relevant Social Media Manager.

9.2.2. You must not include El Shaddai's logos or other trademarks in any social media posting or on your profile on any social media account without first getting the permission from the School's Social Media Manager.

9.2.3. You must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the School's business interests or reputation, even indirectly.

9.2.4. You must not use social media to defame or disparage the School, parents/guardians of the School, staff or any third party. You may not harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against other Learners, parents/guardians, staff or third parties. In addition, you may not make false or misleading statements or impersonate fellow Learners, staff or third parties.

9.2.5. **It is important to note:** that although your personal social media account(s) are for your personal use only, the way in which you present yourself online is a reflection of the School and will have a direct impact on our reputation. We urge you to be careful in your posts/interactions and recommend that your social media accounts are private.

10. SAFE, RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA USE

We do not want to tell you how to use your own personal social media account or what to post however, the basic guidelines below can be used to help guide you in using your personal social media account *responsibly.*

10.1.   YOU SHOULD NOT:

10.1.1. Create or transmit material that might be **defamatory or incur liability** for the School.

10.1.2. Post message, status updates or links to material or **content that is inappropriate**. Inappropriate content includes (but is not limited to):
10.1.2.1.   pornography,
10.1.2.2.   racial or religious slurs,
10.1.2.3.   gender-specific comments,
10.1.2.4.   information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs.

10.1.3. The definition of *inappropriate content or material* also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone based on (but not limited to): race; age; sex; religious or political beliefs; national origin; disability sexual orientation; and or any other characteristic protected by law.

If you run across inappropriate material that makes you feel uncomfortable, or is not respectful, tell the Social Media Manager right away.

10.1.4. Use social media for any **illegal or criminal activities** or promote any illegal or criminal activity.

10.1.5. Send **offensive or harassing material** to others via social media.

10.1.6. Broadcast **unsolicited views** on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.

10.1.7. Distribute on social media any revenge pornography (including naked/revealing pictures/images or videos of someone, or intimate messages sent by somebody without their express consent).

10.1.8. Send or post messages or material that **could damage El Shaddai's or your or your family's image or reputation**. Think – What would Jesus Post!

10.1.9. Post anything that is **offensive, disrespectful or rude**.

10.1.10. Post, upload, forward a link to **spam, junk email or chain emails and messages**.

10.1.11. **Post anything that is considered to be cyberbullying.** Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully or hurt someone else and can include (but is not limited to):
10.1.11.1. Sending or sharing hurtful or abrasive messages or emails.
10.1.11.2. Humiliating others by posting or sharing embarrassing videos or pictures.
10.1.11.3. Spreading rumours of lies online.
10.1.11.4. Setting up fake accounts or online profiles.
10.1.11.5. Excluding others online purposively.
10.1.11.6. Repeated harassment and threatening messages (cyberstalking).

Only post comments that are of uplifting and of a positive nature about fellow ESCS Learners and/or teachers.

10.2.   YOU SHOULD:

10.2.1. Report any incidences of bullying, harassment, sexting or other inappropriate communications concerning or involving any Learner of the School or other individual associated with our School as soon as they become aware to the Social Media Manager or any other staff member at the School.

10.2.2. Use any School WhatsApp / Hangout groups in accordance with the guidelines stated under **Annexure A**.

10.2.3. Only use the School's logo once written permission from the Head of the School has been received to do so.

10.3.   POSTING PICTURES OR VIDEOS OF OTHER LEARNERS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS OR SCHOOL STAFF/COACHES

10.3.1. If you want to post any pictures/videos on the School's social media accounts of other Learners, parents/guardians or members of the School's staff or a coach you **must** confirm this with and get authorisation from the Social Media Manager **prior** to posting.

10.3.2. The Social Media Manager will confirm if the necessary consents have been given to take and post the picture or video of the person on social media.

10.3.3. Once the Social Media Manager has authorised you to post the picture/video, only then may you do so.

10.3.4. **THIS PROCESS MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO AND LEARNERS MUST BE CAUTIOUS IN THEIR POSTINGS. IT MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NOT ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS HAVE GIVEN THEIR CONSENT TO THEIR CHILD/CHILDREN'S PICTURE/VIDEO TO BE POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA.**

11. HOW WILL THIS POLICY BE ENFORCED?

11.1. MONITORING SOCIAL MEDIA USE

11.1.1. The School has the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, any Learner activities using the School's IT and internet resources, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that the School's rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources. Any examination or monitoring will only be carried out by authorised Staff (e.g. the Social Media Manager).

11.1.2. All data relating to social networks written, sent, or received through the School's computer systems forms part of the official School records.

11.1.3. The School can be legally compelled to show that information to law enforcement agencies or other parties.

11.1.4. If you as a Learner of the School are engaging in an inappropriate fashion, the School will intervene to prevent damage either to the School or to the individuals involved.

11.2. **EXAMINATION OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND/OR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS.**

11.2.1. The School reserves the right to examine the social media accounts (if accessible) of any Learner attending the School.

11.2.2. The School reserves the right to confiscate and examine the personal electronic device of any Learner, including any audio or video recording stored on such device, where there is a reasonable suspicion by any member of staff or any administrator or representative of the School that such Learner is in breach of any provision of this Policy, any other School Policy or any other School Rule.

11.3. POTENTIAL SANCTIONS

11.3.1. In addition to legal consequences a Learner may face, knowingly breaching this Social Media Policy is a serious matter. Learners who do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. Any Learner suspected of committing a breach of this Policy will be required to cooperate with the School's investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

11.3.2. Learners may be required to remove any social media content that the School considers to constitute a breach of this Policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

11.3.3. Learners may also be held personally liable for violating this Policy and/or expelled.

11.3.4. Where appropriate, the School will involve the police or other law enforcement agencies in relation to breaches of this Policy.

Annexure A
El Shaddai Christian School WhatsApp / Hangout Guidelines:

Please adhere to these WhatsApp and Hangout Guidelines put together by the School's Social Media Manager and Head of the School to protect both Learners and the School.

1. **SET-UP OF GROUPS**
    a. School WhatsApp groups must only be set-up by a teacher/Staff member, Social Media Manager or the Principal of the School. In certain instances, a Learner will be given permission to set up a WhatsApp group.

    b. If you want to set up a WhatsApp group regarding School activities please ask the Social Media Manager before setting up the group. The Social Media Manager needs to give you permission to set up the WhatsApp group.

    c. School WhatsApp groups can either be set up between:-
        i.   Staff member and parents/guardians;
        ii. Staff member and Learners; or
        iii. Between Learners (with at least, Staff member or Social Media Manager as Admin in addition to a Learner as Admin).

    d. In certain circumstances, the Social Media Manager may request you to set up the WhatsApp group using the social media account of the School and not on your/the Learner's personal account.

    e. The Social Media Manager (or a Staff member selected by the Social Media Manager) must form part of the newly created WhatsApp group and will have the right to monitor the activities on the WhatsApp group.

    f. The Learner who has been given permission to set up a WhatsApp group for School activities must decide, prior to setting up the WhatsApp group, which group members they would like to add to such a group and inform the Social Media Manager. The Social Media Manager must give the Learner permission to add (or delete) members on the group. The Social Media Manager must also inform the Learner about which group member's parents/guardians have given consent for photos or videos to be posted about their child.

    g. The first message on any WhatsApp group created by a Learner should be posted by the authorised Learner/ Admin of the group and should read:

        "Take note that the use of this WhatsApp Group is subject to our Social Media Policy and Privacy Policy. Please make sure that you have read these policies. Please do not use this group to air grievances or complaints. It would be preferred that Learners message the concerned person privately or schedule an appointment with the relevant class teacher/ member of El Shaddai staff."

    h. All groups between Learners must be set up with only the group captain / student forum leader and other students where only the captain or student forum leaders are Admin and able to post. The relevant Staff member or Social Media Manager must also be added as an Admin user to this group.

    i. The following clause must form part of the group description:

        "The purpose of this WhatsApp group is to provide a platform for sharing School information and for fostering support between teacher or coach and pupils OR student forum and pupils, relating to School activities. Content posted in this group may constitute personal information and may under no circumstances be shared externally without obtaining the necessary consents. Please do not use this group to air grievances or complaints. It would be preferred that Learners message the concerned person privately or schedule an appointment with the relevant teacher."

2. OTHER

a. **No "out of hours" use of the groups**. The "hours" of all School WhatsApp Broadcast Groups are from 7 am - 7 pm. Communications must only be sent between these times. These groups must only be used outside of these hours for emergencies or in cases where all the group users agree to using the group outside these hours for a specific event or purpose.

b. **School business only.** These groups are for School related business only and for the purpose of discussion of the topic for which the group was set-up for. No unrelated business, current affairs or social issues must be discussed on these groups. Advertising, political endorsement, memes, jokes and the likes are prohibited on these groups.

c. **Positive content only**. These groups are not places for the discussion of gripes with the School, teachers, parents/guardians or Learners. If there is an issue that is of concern, it must be raised through the appropriate channels not on any form of social media. Always be careful with the tone of your messages and remember that context is often not clear online. Emotions can cause offence/confusion so use them wisely.

d. **Only reply to the message if necessary.** If a message does not require a response, please do not respond. The number of messages on these groups can become overwhelming. You do not need to acknowledge receipt unless specifically requested to do so.

e. **Absolutely no profanity.** Please refrain from using profanity and foul language on the group. Learners are to behave in line with the Schools ethos and morals when communicating on the group. Group members must respect one another even if their opinion differs.

f. **The common sense test.** Anyone who posts something on the group should use the common sense test. Before posting anything on the group ask yourself – "Am I happy for the content to be posted, stated and discussed in any public forum at the School?" If you are not happy for the content to be discussed in public, do not post it.

g. **Personal Information.** Should any Learner wish to post personal information (including photos and videos) on the group the Learner must be certain that they have received the necessary consents (in writing) to do so. Only post personal information of another Learner if the Social Media Manager or Learner Admin of the WhatsApp group has informed you that the necessary consent has been obtained to post such personal information.