

PHOKWANE DEVELOPMENT FORUM – RULES FOR MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

INTRODUCTION

Phokwane Development Forum (PDF) is a social networking and community development entity founded on 20 April 2019 in the community of Phokwane. A WhatsApp communication platform has been created for the purposes of communication so that members/subscribers can follow events in the organisation and the community of Phokwane.

RULES

For the purpose of ensuring that the platform runs smoothly and sustainably, we need to ensure that we minimise room for individual discretion which inevitably, will result in disorder and conflict. Therefore, the following rules shall apply to all members/subscribers:

1. ADMINISTRATION

The administrator of the group carries the responsibilities for the running as well as maintenance of discipline and order in the group. The administrator has the power and privilege to remove any participants from the group after consultations without notification. He also has such power and privilege to prevent any new entrant should he feel that the new entrant does not qualify to be a member of the group by virtue of age or being from a community other than Phokwane.

2. TIME

To avoid unnecessary disturbances or irritation, this platform shall be active from 06:00 to 23:00 seven days a week. However, in case of emergencies like death of a member, an announcement can be made after the time. There will not be a limit during weekends and it will be the decision of individual members to cut themselves out of the chats when they so desire.

3. LANGUAGE

Plain formal English and Sepedi are preferred languages for the group but all official languages are permitted on the platform provided all participants can understand and be in a position to respond should it be necessary to do so. Avoid unnecessary use of acronyms and abbreviations where these may not be understood. A foul or crude language should be avoided at all times. Participants are also urged to edit their comments so that they are readable and well-understood. Avoid the use of self-invented WhatsApp jargon which may confuse other members (e.g. R U k meaning "Are you okay?").

4. POLITICS AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

South Africa is a highly politicised society hence political discourse has become part of our culture. Besides, politics has a big impact on our lives and therefore we are bound to ventilate from time to time. However, politics can be very divisive especially where people belong to different political parties and persuasions. Against this backdrop, it is anticipated that from time to time members may express political opinions in the name of freedom of expression. This freedom should, however, not be abused to offend or mislead others. Commentators should not presume that other participants are supportive or sympathetic to their political parties and ideologies. This platform should not be used to insult or denigrate leaders in parties or in government for no apparent reason. Comments on traditional leadership, mayors, councillors, educators in the community, church leaders, etc. should be limited to information sharing and announcements only. This platform should not be used to peddle rumours or attack those we may be unhappy with. Members of the group are also urged to avoid taking politics personally.

5. RELIGION

Participants should respect other religions and no one should assume that everybody in the group is a Christian or believer. Religious comments must not attack other churches and denominations.

6. RACE/ETHNICITY

Racial or ethnic slurs are not allowed on the platform regardless of how strongly an individual may feel about these. Racial and ethnic jokes should be carefully thought through before being posted.

7. GENDER

This platform is gender-sensitive and men and women enjoy equal status. Derogatory comments and insinuations about women will not be allowed. Although humour is normal and healthy, always ensure that such humour on gender is not interpreted negatively.

8. BUSINESS AND CAREER

Advertisement of products or services in personal businesses should be arranged with the administrator of the platform. Job and business opportunities can however, be posted on the platform without permission if such opportunities are from a credible source. Please avoid forwarding job/business opportunities from other sources without verification.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS/INVITATIONS

Participants are free to post announcements and invitations regarding weddings, parties or announcement of death and funerals.

10. FUND-RAISING & DONATIONS

Limited fund-raising and request for donations for any particular activity or cause through this platform can be done with the permission of the administrator. It is up to the individual making such request to motivate why it is necessary. However, fund-raising for political or religious activities is discouraged. We also discourage fund-raising through the platform for personal or family matters.

GENERAL

- Avoid posting comments or responses out of anger or excitement and only to feel like apologising or withdrawing later;
- Don't threaten to quit the group for any reason whatsoever. Should the need arise though, please quit silently without giving reasons. Participants who quit the group are allowed to re-join but this should not be a habit;
- Avoid being personal and vengeful. Discuss issues with those you feel offended you by their comments without posting on the platform as sometimes messages are misunderstood or misinterpreted. Heated exchanges must be avoided on the platform as they may influence and divide the group into cliques. Equally, affections and praise should not reflect a desire to create loyalties and factions in the group.
- Avoid using the platform to deal with "unfinished business" from the past. Forgive those who might have hurt your feelings in those bygone years and move on with life;
- Avoid posting very long and boring comments with weak arguments just because you are bored or idle. Some participants are professionals or businessmen/businesswomen and therefore may have little free time to read;
- Avoid forwarding videos and articles from other sources with unsound content or graphics that may cause discomfort to sensitive individuals, especially pornography or scenes of extreme violence and bloodshed.

- Note that there are different age groups in the platform and therefore always respect older members of the group by making age-inappropriate comments on the platform.

NOTE:

These rules are not meant to limit free expression or prescribe limits on engagement amongst members. You are therefore also advised to use common sense and sound judgement as a professional at all times.