

MUTARE POLYTECHNIC; CYBER SECURITY POLICY

CB 001

1. PREAMBLE

Mutare polytechnic is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, staff, and stakeholders. Cyber bullying is a serious issue that can have severe consequences on individuals and the community. This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for preventing, reporting, and responding to cyber bullying incidents. These guidelines are intended to supplement, not replace, all existing laws, regulations and policies of Zimbabwe. The policy is designed in compliance with the National ICT policy and Cyber and Data protection Act. The policy seeks to protect, and apply safe and best practices.

This policy seeks to create a comprehensive framework to create awareness, and respond to cyberbullying

This policy is binding on all Polytechnic staff, students and third party contractors.

The following should be read in conjunction with:

- Polytechnic Student Code of Conduct
- College ICT policy
- Anti Sexual Harassment policy
- Relevant legislation

2. DEFINITIONS

In this policy, unless stated otherwise -

Complainant means any person alleging any form of cyber bullying whether or not he or she is a member of the Polytechnic community, and whether or not he or she falls into any of the categories of persons defined above.

Cyber bullying and harassment

Any person who unlawfully and intentionally by means of any electronic device or information system generates and sends any data message to another person, or posts on any material whatsoever on any electronic medium accessible by any person, with the intent to coerce, intimidate, harass, threaten, bully or cause substantial emotional distress, or to degrade, humiliate or demean the person of another or to encourage a person to harm himself or herself

Cyber bullying is defined as any form of bullying behavior that occurs through digital means, including:

*Enclosed
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- Sending or posting hurtful, threatening, or intimidating messages or images
- Spreading rumors or lies about someone online
- Excluding or isolating someone from online activities or social media
- Impersonating or hacking into someone's online account
- Sharing or distributing explicit or private content without consent

Transmission of data message inciting violence or damage to property

Any person who unlawfully by means of any electronic device or information system makes available, transmits, broadcasts or distributes a data message to any person, group of persons or to the public with intent to incite such persons to commit acts of violence against any person or persons or to cause damage to college property shall be guilty of an offence.

Sending threatening data message

Any person who unlawfully and intentionally by means of any electronic device or information system sends any data message to another person threatening harm to the person or the person's family or friends or damage to the property of such persons

Transmission of false data message intending to cause harm

Any person who unlawfully and intentionally by means of any electronic device or information system makes available, broadcasts or distributes data to any other person concerning an identified or identifiable person knowing it to be false with intent to cause psychological or economic harm

The creation, dissemination, storage and display of obscene or pornographic material.

The creation, dissemination, storage and display of indecent images of children.

The creation, dissemination, storage and display of hate literature.

The creation, dissemination, storage and display of material that promote terrorism.

Staff means any person who is employed by the Polytechnic, in any capacity whatsoever, including but not limited to a permanent or contractual capacity.

Student means a person who has been admitted to the Polytechnic for the purpose of studying or who has registered for a qualification. A student remains a student until such time as that person graduates or otherwise completes studies, or withdraws from the Polytechnic, or fails to attend or register in any semester, or is excluded and all appeal processes for re-admission have been exhausted.

Third Party Contractors mean persons who are not in employees of the Polytechnic, but who have been contracted by the Polytechnic, or any authorised agent of the Polytechnic, for the rendering of services. This shall include but not be limited to

employees, agents and sub-contractors, as well as any person who is present at the Polytechnic at the behest of the Polytechnic or any third party contractor.

Polytechnic means the Mutare Polytechnic, and includes any campus of the Polytechnic, as well as any other buildings, premises or sports facilities, which are owned or otherwise occupied by the Polytechnic for the purposes of the activities of the Polytechnic. This includes but is not limited to 'off-campus' residences, sports facilities, buildings and premises that are not situated on any campus.

Visitors means people who are not staff, students or third party contractors, who are present on any campus, buildings, premises or sports facilities of the Polytechnic at any time and for any reason whatsoever.

3. JURISDICTION

3.1 Under this policy, the Polytechnic is able to investigate alleged incidents of cyber bullying: that are reported to the Polytechnic, or that occurred at the Polytechnic, or

- that occurred outside the Polytechnic, but have migrated to or have created a hostile environment at the Polytechnic; or
- that occurred during the course of Polytechnic programmes (regardless of location), or
- where the respondent is a staff member, student or third party contractor.

3.2 This policy applies to staff, students or third party contractors at the Polytechnic, to any act of cyber bullying by a staff member, student or third-party contractor at or outside the Polytechnic.

3.3 This policy applies to any complainant alleging cyber bullying by a staff member, student or third party contractor, whether or not the complainant is a staff member, student or third party contractor.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

4.1 Prevention and Education-

Awareness Campaigns: Regular awareness campaigns will be conducted to educate students, staff, and stakeholders about cyber bullying, its effects, and the consequences of engaging in such behavior.

- **Curriculum Integration:** Cyber bullying prevention and awareness will be integrated into the curriculum, including online safety, digital citizenship, and responsible social media use.

- **Staff Training:** Staff will receive training on recognizing, reporting, and responding to cyber bullying incidents.

4.2 Reporting and Response

Reporting: Incidents of cyber bullying can be reported to the administration of Mutare polytechnic.

- Investigation: Reports will be investigated promptly
- Support: Support will be provided to the victim, including counseling and protection from further harm.
- Discipline: Disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator, including legal action, suspension, or expulsion.

4.3 Consequences

Disciplinary Action: Students who engage in cyber bullying will face disciplinary action, including legal action, suspension, or expulsion.

- Legal Action: In severe cases, cyber bullying may be reported to law enforcement, and legal action may be taken.

- 4.2 The Polytechnic will not tolerate the justification of any form of cyber bullying
 - 4.3 In any complaint involving of cyber bullying the Polytechnic commits itself to respecting and protecting the rights of all the parties involved to confidentiality, privacy, dignity and psychological and physical bodily integrity.
 - 4.4 The Polytechnic commits itself to ensure complainants have access to counselling and health services
 - 4.5 The Polytechnic reserves the right where appropriate and necessary to amend existing disciplinary rules and codes of conduct to make provision for cyber bullying as a serious offence denoting severe sanctions.
 - 4.6 In addition to possible internal disciplinary proceedings, the Polytechnic further commits itself to advising the complainant of his/her right to institute civil and/or criminal proceedings.
 - 4.7 The administration of the Polytechnic shall establish a committee to receive and investigate complaints of cyber bullying. The committee shall comprise of knowledgeable members who are representative of the different interest groups.
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- 4.8 The Polytechnic commits itself to regulations for the implementation of this policy. The regulations will prescribe the steps to follow when a complaint of cyber bullying is received and the response measures that must be taken.
- 4.9 The Polytechnic will record all decisions taken under this policy, and keep comprehensive updated and accurate data on all reported cases of cyber bullying, and will ensure that an annual statistical report is submitted to Senate.
- 4.10 The Polytechnic commits itself to facilitating educational interventions towards raising awareness and developing understanding about cyber bullying
- 4.11 The College commits itself to monitor the effective implementation of this policy.

5. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

- 5.1 This policy will apply to the Polytechnic Disciplinary Rules and Code of Conduct. Any violation thereof will be subject to the appropriate sanctions depending on various factors such as the severity or gravity of the offence, the interests of the Polytechnic and the impact on the complainant.
- 5.2 This policy will also apply to all staff. Any violation thereof will be subject to the appropriate sanctions depending on (but not limited to) the factors as mentioned in 5.1 above.
- 5.3 This policy will be incorporated in all agreements with third party contractors, their agents and sub-contractors rendering services to the Polytechnic. Any violation thereof by such third parties will be subject to the appropriate sanction depending on (but not limited to) the factors as mentioned in 5.1 above.

6. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy shall apply to all Polytechnic staff, students and third party contractors

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this policy shall be 01 January 2026

8. REVIEW DATE

This policy shall be reviewed, at minimum, every three years.