	PERSONNEL POLICY
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TITLE:	**STAFF COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

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Introduction

To support SETA as a thriving and successful centre we must communicate effectively with each other, with our students, work-based learners, parents and with employers. Staff must have the information they need to be successful in their role. Overall we need to take a strategic approach to communication in SETA identifying responsibilities for staff at all levels. This policy has therefore been developed to meet those needs

Vision for Communications

> In all our communications to proactively demonstrate understanding and respect, ensuring that we communicate in a way that is open, timely, clear and appropriate to the recipient.

Definition of communication

The Arbitration, Conciliation and Advisory Service (ACAS) defines communication as,

> The provision and exchange of information and instructions, which enables organisations to function efficiently and employees to be properly informed of developments

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need for staff involvement. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. Every member of staff has a role and a responsibility to support effective communication

For the purposes of this policy communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated. Not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

Methods of Communication

The methods of communication covered by this policy include

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o <u>Verbal communication</u>, face-to-face communication, one to one meetings, committee meetings and discussions.

o <u>Written communications</u>, letters, emails, reports, memos, minutes, and any other written documentation.

o <u>Vertical Communication</u> up and down the organisation usually via the line management structure.

o <u>Lateral Communication</u> across the institution covering staff groups, projects, working groups and organisational levels.

Standards for Communications

All communications at SETA should be

o **Open, honest, professional and transparent**
The reasons for decisions are available. Decision makers are accessible and ready to engage in dialogue. When information cannot be communicated the reasons for non-disclosure are articulated:
Questions are expected and answered

o **Factually accurate and timely**
Information arrives at a time when it is needed, is relevant and able to be interpreted in the correct context

o **Clear**
Messages are communicated in plain English. They are easy to understand and are not open to misinterpretation

o **Two way**
Systems exist to support communication up and down the institution as well as across the sites and various teams.

o **Efficient**
The communication and the way it is delivered is "fit for purpose", cost effective and appropriate to the recipient.

Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to demonstrate the institutional standards in communication. Specifically:

All staff,

These are the core responsibilities for effective communication for all staff at SETA

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- o Staff should be aware of the Communications Policy and demonstrate the principles of good practice
- o Staff are responsible for ensuring that they communicate effectively and appropriately in line with the standards for communication
- o Staff should be aware of the various methods of communication and utilise them appropriately in their work
- o Staff should tackle incidents of poor communication in a proactive and constructive way
- o Information should be shared openly and appropriately in a timely fashion
- o Where a colleague constructively raises an issue relating to poor, or inappropriate communication, the individual should consider carefully this feedback and reflect on their communication style.

Instructors, Training Advisers & Line Managers

Those who have direct responsibility for the supervision or line management of other staff have the following additional responsibilities:

- Ensure effective two way communication operates to and from the Senior Manager and the team
- Ensure effective and appropriate feedback is provided to staff
- Reflect on communication standards and practices within the team and identify opportunities for improvement
- Where staff raise issues of poor communication to take action to ensure they are resolved
- Where communication issues are raised that cannot be dealt with successfully to ensure that they are taken to the Senior Manager for action and support.
- Update the team communication skills as required
- Ensure effective lateral communication between the team and its' students and other customers.
- Support and promote a culture that encourages staff inclusion and involvement and challenges non-engagement.

All Instructors, Training Advisers and Line Managers

All Instructors, Training Advisers and Line Managers have the following additional responsibilities:

- Act as a role model – demonstrating good practice in communication in all aspects of the role
- Ensure that the principles of good practice are applied in each team in their area of responsibility
- Ensure all staff in their area of responsibility have an understanding of the strategic direction of the school
- Ensure all staff understand where their role fits in achieving those longer term objectives

- Ensure that when managers or staff raise issues of poor or ineffective communication they are dealt with proactively and constructively to effective resolution.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Communications Policy and that they meet the standards required by the institution and the team
- Ensure all staff actively engage in proactive communications and challenge non-engagement

Principles of Good Practice

The following examples of good practice are provided as a guide to staff and managers. It is recognised that it may be appropriate to adapt these models to suit the working environment.

All Identified Meetings
- Should take place on a regular and planned basis.
- Should be attended by all members of the team
- Opportunities should be provided for all staff to contribute equally.
- The agenda should be open to input from the whole team.
- Meetings should be held at a time and in a venue, which allows and encourages input.

Agenda items for team meetings should include
> Strategic and longer term planning
> Areas for development
> Opportunities to share good practice
> Opportunities to understand the work and contribution of team members
> Operational objectives and progress
> Health and Safety
> Work-based learner or stakeholder feedback
> Feedback to Senior Managers

Planning Change – Staff Inclusion and Involvement
We will actively seek opportunities to include and involve staff in changes that will impact on them and their work. In some cases this may be a minor operational issue, at other times it could be more significant strategic change. Staff should be advised in advance of any planned change and be given an opportunity to have input, the subsequent ideas being considered before the decision is made

Use of Intranet
Individual teams / departments should provide details of their work on the intranet so that colleagues in other areas can be informed about how they operate. This will benefit lateral communication across the institution.

All staff should have access to the intranet systems and be provided with relevant training. All staff should be actively encouraged to make appropriate information available on the intranet and use this as the initial source of information (see also Acceptable Use Policy)

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Email

E-mail communication should be effective, professional and succinct. Staff should consider if e-mail is always the best way to communicate or if face to face communication would work more effectively.

All staff should respond to incoming e-mail and telephone messages directed for their attention at the earliest opportunity.

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