



Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj

Established in 1932

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"Satyameva Jayate" - Truth Alone Prevails

Celebrating 82 Years of Selfless Service

SAMAJ COMMUNICATION POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy document is to outline the communication policy adopted by the Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj in order to regulate the Samaj's communication with key stakeholders.

2. PREAMBLE

The efficient functioning of any organisation demands that it has a well-defined communication policy that regulates its interaction with a range of stakeholders, both internal and external. The Seva Samaj has identified its community members as a key constituency that it needs to communicate with on a regular basis in a clear, accurate and timely manner on a range of issues whilst also ensuring that important external stakeholders such as other community organisations, authorities and the press are kept properly informed.

The recent advancements in information technology have made it possible for organisations to communicate rapidly with its membership, irrespective of numbers or location. The SAMAJ has decided to keep its members informed of all its activities via such technological innovations as mass email messaging systems, cell-phone SMS text messaging, social media platforms, such as Facebook, as well as via a dedicated website. However, clear guidelines are needed to ensure that these systems are properly utilised.

3. SMS MESSAGE SYSTEM

- 3.1 The SMS messaging system will be managed by the Samaj office on behalf of the Secretary-General and/or Assistant Secretary of the Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj (SPHSS).

This policy was drafted and adopted in June 2010 and revised in January & March 2015

- 3.2 All requests by officials, trustees and members of the public for use of the system must be directed to the Samaj Office.
- 3.3 SMS messages sent under the auspicious of the SPHSS will be sent free of charge to members only. Membership is defined in the constitution of the SPHSS as being any Gujarati person residing in the greater Pretoria / Tshwane area.
- 3.4 The free SMS will be sent to only one person per household.
- 3.5 Additional family members in the same household may apply to receive SMS messages at a cost to be determined annually i.e. before March by the Executive Committee.
- 3.6 Non-members wishing to receive SMS messages will be required to pay a sum to be determined annually i.e. before March by the Executive Committee.
- 3.7 Payment for SMS messaging must be made in advance before the end of January for the calendar year in which SMS messages are required
- 3.8 Should a person request to be included on the SMS database during the course of the year, the full amount for the year must be paid. No pro-rata payment is allowed.
- 3.9 Funeral messages of deceased members i.e. members as defined by the SPHSS constitution, will be sent at no charge.
- 3.10 Upon request of a family member, funeral messages of deceased non-members will be sent at a cost determined annually by the EC to defray costs.
- 3.11 Any Community or non-profit organisation wishing to send an SMS will be charged a nominal fee determined annually by the EC to cover cost of the message. Messages cannot exceed 160 characters (including punctuation).
- 3.12 SMS messages for commercial gain will cost R500-00, reviewed annually, subject to the following: (1) message may not be sent under the banner of the SPHSS; (2) the secretariat of the SPHSS approves the content of the message; (3) messages cannot exceed 160 characters (including punctuation); and (4) Samaj may not send more than 2 commercial messages per month to its membership; (5) a disclaimer indicating that it is a paid message is included.
- 3.13 Since messages are sent via electronic media the Samaj takes no responsibility for failure for transmission caused by network or technical difficulties that are beyond its control. In such an event, the Samaj will refund any payments made. In the event of delayed transmission not caused by negligence of a Samaj official, no refund will be given.

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3.14 Community members are welcome to forward requests for an SMS message to be sent out at no charge with respect to any community benefit information. Such message, however, will only be sent subject to approval by the secretariat.

3.15 The Samaj reserves the right to review the costs as and when it deems necessary

4. MASS E-MAIL MESSAGES

4.1 The Samaj office will be responsible for assisting the Secretary-General in developing and maintaining an email database

4.2 The mass emailing of messages will be managed and controlled by the Secretary-General and/or Assistant Secretary of the Samaj.

4.3 Community members may request that emails that have a community-benefit message be sent via the email database. The sending out of any such information remains the sole prerogative of the Samaj.

4.4 Any number of members of a household may request to have their email addresses added free of charge on to the database.

4.5 E-mail addresses will immediately be removed from the database upon such a request being sent to the Secretary-General/ Office

4.6 Any message that has no “cultural upliftment” content and is driven purely by profit (for example, advertising for a private business) is seen as the kind of message that the mass email system will not be used for.

4.7 Any message that has a “cultural content” and is offered completely free of charge, will be provided for.

4.8 Any message that has a “cultural content” and for which (in the opinion of the secretariat) a nominal or reasonable fee is being charged i.e. just enough to defray expenses but not so much as to be seen as purely commercial, is catered for, subject to a fee determined annually by the Executive.

4.9 Any message that has a “cultural content” but which, in the opinion of the secretariat, an exorbitant fee is being charged is not catered for.

4.10 All emails sent by the Samaj in accordance with clauses 4.7 and 4.8, must include a disclaimer that the Samaj does not necessarily support the initiative advertised, nor does it necessarily subscribe to any views or opinions expressed therein.

5. COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

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- 5.1 In order to ensure that every community member is fully informed of the workings of the Samaj, the Secretary-General shall ensure that all minutes of Executive Committee meetings are circulated within two (2) weeks of EC meetings.
- 5.2 The Secretary-General is required to acknowledge receipt, in writing, within two weeks of any written correspondence or complaints directed to him by any member of the community and to respond to it within 30 days.
- 5.3 All members of the community must be informed of all meetings, including AGM's and special meetings by means of newsletters, e-mails, SMS, notice board, a local newspaper or by any other means possible
- 5.4 Within two weeks after the AGM, the Executive Committee shall provide the community with the names and contact details of all newly elected members of the Executive Committee and those of Portfolio Committee members a month thereafter.

6. COMMUNICATION WITH THE PRESS

- 6.1 All communication to the Press must be done through the Secretary-General.
- 6.2 As far as is possible, the Press must be asked to send its request for comment in writing.
- 6.3 As far as is possible, the Secretary-General should respond to enquiries by the press in writing to avoid being misquoted or quoted out of context.
- 6.4 All statements to the Press must be cleared with the President.

7. WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

- 7.1 A website detailing the various activities of the Samaj is to be maintained by the secretariat/office
- 7.2 Subject to approval, commercial advertisements may be carried on the website at a cost to be determined by the executive.
- 7.3 Whenever possible, emails and other forms of communications should also be uploaded onto the Samaj and Navyug Mandal social platforms such as Facebook, etc.

8. PROCEDURE FOR UPDATING OF DATABASES

The following procedures must be followed in ensuring the databases are up-to-date:

- 8.1 The Administrator is required to ensure all changes to be effected are done on each of the following (relevant) Samaj databases: the online Website directory database; the Outlook Email database; the excel directory database; and the SMS database.

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- 8.2 The administrator must send out annual reminders to members via SMS, email or any other means to provide the office with any new/changed contact details (addresses, telephone numbers, etc.) should these events have occurred during the course of the year;
- 8.3 The administrators must change the database information when any of the following occurs:
- The death of a member
 - The marriage of a member;
 - When a minor becomes a member (turns 18)

9. APPROVAL

This revised policy was approved by the executive committee of the Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj at a meeting held on **Monday 31 March 2015** at the Seva Samaj Boardroom.

SPHSS EXECUTIVE