



Social Media and the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct was created to provide guidance and expectations of behaviors on behalf of those serving HOBY. It was designed to protect HOBY, the Ambassadors, volunteers and local sites from behavior that could be detrimental to the effectiveness of the programs, the health and safety of Ambassadors and volunteers, as well as the reputation of HOBY as an organization. For the most part, the Code of Conduct is very straightforward and clear. However, it's worth reviewing a few particular points.

First, much of the Code of Conduct applies beyond the 3 days of a seminar, the 8 days of WLC, or the one day of a CLeW or Alumni Event. Violations of the Code of Conduct which negatively impact HOBY; any programs; other volunteers, Ambassadors, or alumni can, and sometimes do, occur outside of specifically scheduled programs and events. For example, one of the bullet points in the Code states: "I will refrain from any form of personal abuse/attacks towards ambassadors, alumni, volunteers, staff, board and others, including verbal, physical and emotional abuse." Clearly, such abuse can occur at any time. If HOBY International is notified of possible violations of the Code of Conduct, an investigation is conducted, documentation gathered and disciplinary action, if necessary, may be applied.

Recently, social networking has been a subject of some debate regarding the Code of Conduct. Social networking sites are wonderful communication and networking tools. They have helped keep HOBY stakeholders connected, motivated and inspired. In fact, the Official Facebook HOBY Fan Page, HOBY Twitter, and HOBY YouTube Channel are great examples. (If you haven't joined yet, please do so at <http://www.facebook.com/HOBY>, <http://www.twitter.com/HOBY>, and <http://www.youtube.com/HOBY>.)

However, cyber-bullying, inappropriate commentary and/or photos can be violations of the Code of Conduct, regardless of when they were posted. HOBY is not unique in this regard. Many employers will also act (including reprimands, suspensions, and terminations), in response to social network postings deemed inappropriate, even if the activity occurs outside company time. Employers and university admissions offices often look at social networking sites prior to accepting candidates. What is written, photographed, or recorded and posted can have a negative impact beyond what one might expect.

Obviously, HOBY does not have the staff, nor frankly, the inclination to search for and review postings and other activities by our vast network of volunteers and alumni. And fortunately, for the most part, we don't have to do so. But when an issue is raised or a complaint filed, though a rare occurrence when considering the total number of HOBY volunteers and alumni nationwide, we do have an obligation to investigate and act accordingly. HOBY volunteers remain some of the most dedicated and inspiring people in the country, and for that we are grateful! If you have any questions regarding the Code of Conduct and its practical application, please do not hesitate to contact your DNP.

With this information in mind, HOBY recognizes that the line in using your own social media space as a HOBY volunteer or other stakeholder is often blurred when dealing with other HOBY stakeholders or the general public. We encourage members of the HOBY community to use social media as a way to stay connected, but remember that while social networking is fun and valuable, there are some risks you should keep in mind. In the social media world there is often no line between what is public and private, personal or professional. We've created these general social networking/media guidelines that are important for you to consider as you share your thoughts, views and perspectives—as a member of the HOBY community—in the virtual world.

Use Good Judgment

- We expect you to use good judgment in all situations—that applies in the world of social networking/media as well.
- Remember to know and follow the HOBY Code of Conduct.
- Just as we work to maintain an environment in our programs that is positive, respectful and inclusive for all our stakeholders, let's work together to do the same in the social networking/media world.

Be Transparent

- Even though you are a HOBY volunteer, unless you are specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the organization or one of its affiliates as a spokesperson, you should state that the views expressed in your postings, etc. are your own.
- Be open about your affiliation with HOBY and the role/position you hold.

Don't Share Everything

- Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential or not public. Online 'conversations' are never private!
- If it seems confidential, it probably is. If you have any questions about what is considered confidential, check in with your Leadership Seminar Chair, Corporate Board President, or Director of National Programs.
- To ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide to anyone, including fellow members of the HOBY community.
- NEVER give out or transmit personal information of participants or fellow volunteers.

Show Respect

- Please respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of HOBY, its affiliates, and sponsors.
- You may use photos and video (products, etc.) from events, but do so with the permission of those included in the material.
- Please do not post pictures of others (participants, fellow volunteers, etc.) without their permission.

Scenario:

Q: You see something on YouTube/Facebook (or any other sharing/social media type site) regarding HOBY and you aren't sure if the content is appropriate, what do you do?

A: Ask yourself the following questions:

Is it HOBY appropriate?

If a potential corporate donor was doing research to decide whether to give you a donation, and they saw this posting would it make a favorable impression?

If a foundation to which you applied for a grant was doing research to decide whether to give you a donation, and they saw this posting would it make a favorable impression?

If a potential GIK donor was doing research to decide whether to give you a GIK donation, and they saw this posting would it make a favorable impression?

If a school administrator or guidance counselor was doing research to decide whether to send a student to your seminar, and they saw this posting would it make a favorable impression?

If a potential volunteer was doing research to decide whether to volunteer with your site, and they saw this posting would it make a favorable impression?

If a potential ambassador was doing research to decide whether to attend your seminar, and they saw this posting would it make a favorable impression?

If a parent of a potential ambassador was doing research to decide whether to send their son or daughter to your seminar, and they saw this posting would it make a favorable impression?

If your answer to any of these questions is no, it shouldn't be online. But it is. And you don't have control over everything that is online and what gets video-taped and posted, but you do have control over what actually happens at your seminar or HOBY event. If you discover an unfavorable posting, it should be taken down immediately, or report it to your DNP for investigation.

Anything with the name of HOBY on it affects us all - all sites, HOBY International, WLC, TI, seminars in other countries - not just the particular site where the posting originated.