

Society Youth Policy Statement¹

It is the mission of the Society "to enrich lives through singing." In fulfilling that mission, the Society, its subsidiaries, districts, chapters, and members sponsor and/or participate in a wide range of activities involving young persons. As provided in the Society bylaws and statements of policy, young men may be considered for Society membership. In keeping with the Society's commitment to maintain high standards of personal conduct by its members and to provide a wholesome environment in which the activities of the Society and its subordinate units take place, and in order to support and sustain the Society's good name and reputation in the communities that it serves, the Society Board of Directors has adopted this Youth Policy Statement.

1. Policy Application

This Youth Policy shall apply to all activities of the Society or any of its subsidiaries, districts, and chapters, and to all activities of Society members where they are (or may reasonably be expected to be) identified as being members of, or acting on behalf of, the Society or one of its subordinate units, when such activities (as used in this Youth Policy, an "Activity," or "Activities") involve (or may be anticipated to involve) participation by Youth. Activities may include (but are not limited to) meetings, performances, clinics or schools, social events, or other public or private events. For the purpose of this Youth Policy, "Youth" are defined as persons who have not attained the legal age of majority in the jurisdiction in which the Activity takes place, and Youth involvement may include (but is not limited to) participation as a guest, student or enrollee, or participation as a Society member.

2. General Standards of Conduct

Society members shall conduct themselves as men of good character and good ambassadors of the Society, being careful to avoid the use of inappropriate language and actions either directed to, or within the sight and/or hearing of Youth. All persons attending any Activity are expected to comply with all laws of the jurisdiction in which the activity takes place.

3. Members' Responsibility

It is the responsibility of **every** Society member to be aware of the impact that his conduct may have upon Youth who may be present at any Activity. It is also the responsibility of **every** Society member to bring to the attention of any member whose conduct at any Activity may seem inappropriate, the need to correct the situation immediately. In the event the situation is not promptly corrected, or if the nature of the conduct (whether corrected or not) is deemed serious enough to warrant further action, it is the responsibility of the Society member(s) observing such conduct to report the same to an appropriate Society, district or chapter officer. Upon receipt of any such report, it is the responsibility of the Society, district or chapter officer to evaluate the same, and to take such further action, pursuant to the Society's Code of Ethics, or otherwise, as is deemed necessary or appropriate.

4. Youth Responsibility

Parents are responsible for the conduct of their Youth participating in Activities. For the purpose of this Youth Policy, "Parent" is defined as the parent, guardian, school or institutional representative, or other person or persons having parental or supervisory responsibility and authority for the Youth. Neither the Society nor any of its subsidiaries, districts or chapters shall have or assume the role or responsibility of Parent for any Youth participating in any Activity. In the event a Youth's Parent is not, or will not be personally present during an Activity in which the Youth is participating other than an "Exempt Activity" described in paragraph 8 below, the Parent must provide a written designation, naming and authorizing another person who will be present, to act in place of the Parent to fulfill the role and responsibility of the Parent. The designation must include the specific authority to obtain, provide, or give consent for any necessary emergency medical treatment to the Youth, including (but not limited to) surgical procedures that may be recommended by a physician, in the event of any medical emergency involving the Youth. A Society member who is also a Parent, or who has been named and authorized to act in place of a Parent, performs that function in his individual and personal capacity, and not as an agent or representative of the Society, or any of its subsidiaries, districts, or chapters.

1. ¹ Society Rules & Regulations Handbook – 11/3/09 Edition

5. **Alcohol**

Youth may not be permitted to attend any Activity where alcohol is served, made available, or being consumed, unless accompanied by a Parent or other person having parental responsibility and authority for the supervision and control of the Youth. Youth shall not be permitted to consume alcohol at any Activity, whether or not the Youth's Parent consents to such consumption. Society members who consume alcohol at Activities where Youth are present must be particularly careful to demonstrate responsible usage.

6. **Society Membership**

Under the provisions of the Society bylaws and statements of policy, Youth may become Society members, although it is recommended (but not required) that 16 years be considered as the minimum age for membership. Where membership is to be extended to or renewed by a Youth, as a condition to the approval or renewal of the membership (i) the Youth's Parent must give written consent to the Youth becoming a member of the Society and the chapter; (ii) the Youth's Parent must agree in writing to be responsible for, and promptly discharge, all financial obligations of the Youth to the chapter, district and Society; (iii) the Youth's Parent (if a member of the chapter which the Youth will join), or a designated and authorized chapter member (if the Youth's Parent is not a member of the chapter) must agree in writing to assume, accept responsibility for, and diligently perform the active supervision and control of the conduct of the Youth in connection with all Activities in which the Youth participates; and (iv) the Youth must acknowledge in writing that his membership and participation is conditioned upon his acceptance of, and compliance with such supervision and control. It shall be the responsibility of each chapter to obtain and retain in the chapter files, a signed and currently effective consent, agreement and designation form for each Youth Member. In the event a chapter member (including a Parent) who is responsible for the supervision and control of any Youth ceases to be a member of the chapter to which the Youth belongs, becomes inactive, or is otherwise unable or unwilling to provide such supervision and control, or fails (in the opinion of the chapter, district or Society board of directors) to provide the supervision and control in a diligent and effective manner, then another chapter member must be designated and authorized, and agree in writing to assume and perform the supervision and control of the Youth.

7. **Youth Participation**

No Youth (as a member, or otherwise) shall be permitted to participate in any Activity, other than an "Exempt Activity" described in paragraph 8 below, unless and until all designations, consents and agreements provided for in this Youth Policy Statement have been obtained and filed in the appropriate chapter, district, subsidiary or Society permanent records, and remain currently effective.

8. **Exempt Activity**

An "Exempt Activity," for which no signed designation, consent and agreement form is required shall include (but is not limited to) the following:

(a) any Activity in which Youth perform or otherwise participate solely as members of an identifiable non-Society related entity or group, so long as such Youth are, at all times, accompanied by and under the control, supervision and/or direction of, one or more adults who, as teacher, director, or leader acting in an official capacity on behalf of the entity or group (or of the organization sponsoring the entity or group), have primary supervisory responsibility for the Youth (such as a school, church or community class or choir, scout troop, or other organized youth or civic organization); or

(b) any interactive workshop, clinic, or demonstration of short duration conducted or provided as part of an event which is organized or sponsored by, and under the leadership of, a non-Society related entity or group, so long as (i) the event is not held on Society premises, or at the meeting place of any Society subordinate unit, and (ii) neither the Society nor any Society subordinate unit receives any portion of any registration fee or similar charge paid by the participating Youth (other than a performance fee not based upon the number or amount of registrations); or

(c) any scheduled or unscheduled public or private performance in which Youth participate solely as spectators or members of an audience, whether or not any admission or fee is charged; or

(d) occasional infrequent attendance at a chapter meeting, as a guest.

Harmony Explosion, or other camps or similar events, however designated, shall not be an "Exempt Activity," whether or not the participation by Youth is limited to participation as set forth in (a) or (b) above.

9. **Interpretation**

The Society Governance & Bylaws Committee is authorized to issue binding regulations and/or determination letters interpreting and applying this Youth Policy consistent with the intent and purpose hereof, including the further definition of "Exempt Activity," or otherwise.

[Sample forms are available from the Society office, for use as guidelines. Chapters, districts, and Society subsidiaries should consult local counsel for advice concerning local law provisions that may be applicable to Youth participation or Youth membership in their jurisdiction, and the suitability of the forms for use in their jurisdiction.]