

HUMANIST ASSOCIATION OF GHANA

CODE OF CONDUCT

LAST UPDATED: 29TH JULY, 2018

CONTENT

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| PURPOSE | 1 |
| AUTHORITY, SCOPE AND JURISDICTION | 1 |
| GENERAL CONDUCT | 2 |
| DISRUPTIVE AND HARASSING BEHAVIORS | 3 |
| RESPONSE PROCEDURES AT LIVE EVENTS | 4 |
| REPORTING VIOLATIONS | 6 |

1. PURPOSE

- a. The Humanist Association of Ghana (HAG) is committed to providing an open and welcoming community that respects every member's personal integrity and reasonable participation. HAG activities, whether organized or informal, should be fun, friendly, and informative.
- b. By its very nature, an atheist/humanist/secular group will be a center of controversial debate. This will include criticism and derision of religion, religious ideas and acts, or prominent figures of any given faith. However, amidst this discussion and debate, members are still expected to adhere to humanist principles, respecting each other and avoiding prejudice or abuse.
- c. HAG is also dedicated to providing a harassment-free environment for all of our members, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying within the organization's activities, functions, or online spaces. In order to facilitate this, the following Code of Conduct for HAG members and officials has been drawn up, and approved by all members on this 29th day of July, 2018.

2. AUTHORITY, SCOPE AND JURISDICTION

- a. "HAG Officials" refers to HAG's executive committee members and anyone appointed by the executive committee to preside over a HAG event or online space (e.g., a forum admin or event host).
- b. This policy applies to the following:
 - i. Online Spaces such as all Social Media spaces (Facebook, Twitter and Google groups), websites and blogs managed by HAG.
 - ii. In-person interactions at HAG or HAG invited events, whether held in public or private venues, with HAG members or non-members.
- c. In evaluating compliance with this policy, HAG officers shall generally consider only activity within the boundaries of section 2.b above. HAG officials are not responsible for adjudicating personal differences that take place outside of HAG venues even if the parties involved are HAG members.
 - i. As far as possible, members are asked to avoid bringing outside conflicts into HAG spaces and events, to simply refrain from interaction with individuals whom they dislike, and to refrain from using HAG events or spaces as opportunities to further their aims in interpersonal conflicts that are not relevant to the group.

3. GENERAL CONDUCT

a. Represent Authentic Humanism

- i. A Member shall uphold and represent the ethical and philosophical principles of humanism as expressed in the Amsterdam declaration of 2002.
- ii. A Member shall adhere to and uphold the purposes, policies, and bylaws of the Humanist Association of Ghana (HAG) and the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU); and shall not willfully contravene or misrepresent the purposes, policies, and bylaws of the HAG or IHEU.
- iii. A Member should be honest in any interaction with the nature of humanism including scientific naturalism and human-based rational ethics.

b. Maintain Humanist Values

- i. A Member should at all times conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the highest degree of honesty and integrity.
- ii. A Member should respect and value the diversity humanism represents. This includes diversity of belief. While Members need not hide their own beliefs or avoid disagreements, they should reserve arguments for the proper time and place.
- iii. A Member shall be expected to treat others with courtesy, dignity, respect, and tolerance, and without prejudice or bigotry. Members will treat those suffering from stress, trauma, or tragedy with the utmost empathy and care.

c. Maintain Professional and Personal Integrity

- i. A Member should treat any information divulged by other members and non-members in HAG spaces with strict confidence at all times within the extent authorized by law.
- ii. A Member should not use their position of respect to further any other paid or voluntary work.
- iii. A Member shall protect the integrity of the humanist community by investigating and reporting violations that may occur.
- iv. A member should conduct personal business as ambassadors of humanism. Financial compensation is appropriate for services provided, but profit-making should never override humanist values.
- v. In performing any service, a Member should never exceed their qualifications. This applies to events or counseling. It is particularly important Members provide no mental health services of any kind without proper qualifications. It is recommended that a list of qualified professional be kept whom issues can be referred to.

- vi. A Member shall be expected to work and interact with other members and associates in an atmosphere of collegiality, cooperation, and mutual benefit, and without undue enmity or disparagement.
 - vii. A Member shall not promote other organizations and or distribute any promotional materials at a HAG event or in any HAG online forum without prior approval from the Organizing Secretary or any HAG official. Also, a member shall not promote HAG at another organization's event or online space without obtaining approval from that organization.
- d. Protect Those In Your Care
- i. A Member should not publicize the content of any event or activity that has been completed without first ensuring that sufficient changes have been made to ensure that identification of the participants is impossible or that participants have authorized, in writing or otherwise, use of their likeness or otherwise.
 - ii. Members shall avoid exploiting those in their care especially for commercial, sexual, political, or other favors.

4. DISRUPTIVE AND HARASSING BEHAVIORS

- a. HAG officers may act to promote the harmonious functioning of the group, to prevent disruption of that harmony at events and in online spaces, and to ensure the safety and well-being of members, participants and attendees.
- b. Egregious forms of harassment (threats, voyeurism, stalking, assault, battery, etc.) are addressed by the laws of Ghana, and members experiencing this type of harassment should report it to the relevant authorities.
- c. Evidence of disruptive or harassing behavior at HAG events and in HAG online spaces that does not reach the level of a crime, but still creates a hostile environment for our members and participants will be considered by HAG officials in a timely manner, at their discretion.
- d. Disruptive or harassing behaviors include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Hostile speech or behavior directed toward another participant, member or attendee, related to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, tribe, or religion.
 - ii. Inappropriate physical contact or unwelcome sexual attention.
 - iii. Any failure to immediately honor a clear request from another person to be left alone. All individuals in HAG space have the right to opt out

- of any verbal interaction, physical contact, or invitation; interfering with that right will be deemed to constitute harassment.
- iv. Libelous or slanderous expressions
 - v. Personal attacks – demeaning a person rather than her or his opinions.
 - vi. Invasion of privacy through photography, recording, or dissemination of personal information without permission.
 - vii. Sustained disruption of talks or other events.
 - viii. Retaliation against any individual who makes a complaint under this policy or provides any information regarding covered events.
- e. Freedom of expression is a core value of HAG, and HAG officials will strive to protect that value while still ensuring the safety and freedoms of all participants.
- i. In responding to a complaint or disruption, HAG officials shall exert the minimum intervention required to restore harmony and safety for its members and participants.
 - ii. Mere disagreement or criticism of any culture, ideology or religious belief is not equal to intimidation, harassment or discrimination, even if such causes offense to individuals present. A participant feeling offended by such disagreement or criticism does not constitute an incident warranting any intervention by HAG officials.
- f. Additional prohibitions apply to online interactions, which will be fixed on the top of each discussion board.

5. RESPONSE PROCEDURES AT LIVE EVENTS

- a. Any attendees at an event who see or experience harassment or disruption as described in Section 4 are asked to report it immediately to a HAG official at that event.
- b. HAG officials may address problematic behavior at the event by:
 - i. Directly requesting that the person cease the problematic behavior
 - This may include explaining to the person why the behavior was experienced as disruptive, harassing, or predatory
 - This may include physically separating the people involved
 - ii. Having the person leave the current event, if the HAG representative feels this is warranted.
 - This may include refunding the person's entrance fee paid, if any

- This may include contacting venue staff (e.g. staff of the restaurant or building) to ask the person to leave the building when behavior has been extremely disruptive.
 - Ejecting a participant is to be considered a last resort, and shall only be deemed necessary in the case of extreme disruption or threat to safety, or after multiple direct requests as described in *5.b.i* have failed to stop the problematic behavior.
 - iii. Summoning police, only if it seems that the disruption has risen to, or seems likely to rise to, the level of a crime.
- c. Actions to be taken after the event:
 - i. In the case of an incident that was successfully resolved via verbal warning/instruction (as described in Section 5.b.i), the HAG official involved shall submit a written description of the event to the Organizing Secretary. If this is a first offense and the outcome at the event was satisfactory, no further action is necessary.
 - If an individual receives a third warning for the same behavior, the executive committee as a whole shall consider whether additional actions or restrictions may be necessary for this individual.
 - ii. In the case of a more serious incident, one which required actions described in Sections *5.b.ii-iii*, the executive committee will meet in a timely fashion after the event to decide, based on all available evidence including past behavior, on any subsequent action which may include:
 - Education
 - Warning, which could specify that the person gets another chance
 - Behavior contract;
 - Restriction from attendance or participation at events;
 - Termination of role as a representative of HAG (e.g. event host, Executive committee member, etc);
 - Termination of HAG membership
 - iii. All investigations and corrective actions by HAG officials under this policy shall be documented in writing and kept on file with the Organizing Secretary.

- iv. In the event that an Executive Committee Member is suspected of problematic behavior:
 - Reports must be kept confidential from the member in question. (This means that group email addresses should not be used. Emails involving the incident(s) should go to the individual members not involved in the incident.)
 - The member in question will be considered to have a conflict of interest and should therefore not be present for discussions or voting on anything related to the incident(s)
- v. In the event that an attendee expresses concern for his or her personal comfort or safety because of the presence of another attendee, absent any prohibited behaviors being exhibited by that other attendee:
 - The complaining attendee should be encouraged to take personal responsibility for his/her own safety and comfort as HAG has no security detail,
 - The complaining attendee shall be encouraged to make a clear statement to the other attendee to be left alone, if necessary, or may request that such a statement be made on their behalf by a HAG Official. (If the other attendee fails to honor that request, they are then in violation of section 4.d.iii above.)
 - Where the event structure and available personnel permit, a HAG official may offer to sit with, escort, or give a ride to the complaining attendee.

6. REPORTING VIOLATIONS

- a. Please report potential offenses to the relevant online or event organizer or to any HAG official.
- b. Reports, bans, and suspensions shall be recorded and shared with the entire HAG membership, and be handled at all levels with confidentiality and with anonymity of the complainant preserved unless otherwise agreed.
- c. Potential offenses may also be reported by phone to HAG official or by email (hello@ghanahumanist.com).

- d. Suspension from membership and participation must be resolved by the Executive Committee within three months, by reinstatement, probation or expulsion as defined by the executive committee and the HAG constitutionitution, or else the suspension ends.
- e. Appeals, whether for further investigation of potential offenses or for reinstatement, can be initiated by contacting any member of the Executive Committee.
- f. Appeals will be resolved by the Executive Committee, or delegated to a non-leadership investigative committee, as appropriate to ensure a fair process and safe HAG community.