** POLICY FOR YOUTH PROTECTION**

**AND THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND HARASSMENT**

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**Copies of all Addendums and Appendices can be found in DACdb, under the tab “Files,” under “Youth,”**

**POLICY FOR YOUTH PROTECTION**

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**Copies of all forms can be found in DACdb, under the tab “Files,” under “Youth,”**

**or at** [**www.RotaryYouth.org**](http://www.RotaryYouth.org)

**Feel free to make copies as necessary**

1. **Introduction**

Strong support and effective management of youth programs throughout the district are essential to ensuring that all youth protection policies, including RI policies, and local laws and regulations, are followed. All district, club-level volunteers and program officers must understand Rotary and district policies and communicate all youth protection concerns to district leaders and/or local law enforcement promptly.

The purpose of this document is to provide specific policies and procedures that apply to the membership of Rotary District 6510 (hereinafter referred to as “District 6510”) and anyone else acting on behalf of District 6510, when dealing with youth in connection with District authorized activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, Rotary Youth Exchange, Interact, and RYLA. These policies and procedures are written in accordance the Rotary International Youth Protection Guide.

Current revisions of these documents can be obtained from the District 6510 website at: <http://www.rotary6510.org/youth-protection.php>

1. **The Rotary International Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth**

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians’ spouse, and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. *(2.100.1 Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth)*

Rotary International has a zero-tolerance policy against abuse and harassment.

**3. District 6510 Policy Statement**

It is the responsibility of every Rotarian to safeguard the welfare of every person with whom they come into contact during their activities as a Rotarian. Special attention is to be given to children, elderly, disabled and other vulnerable persons. This includes the prevention of all forms of abuse, harassment and neglect including physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse.

4. **Scope**

This Policy applies directly to all Rotarians and volunteers including host families and club counselors involved in District 6510 Youth Program activities or events. This Policy also applies to all adults over the age of 18 years who are ordinarily resident in homes in which an exchange student is residing. This policy also applies to all Rotarians and volunteers involved in RYE, RYLA, and INTERACT and all other youth programs.

**5.**  **Definitions**

**Casual Contact** - Persons having casual contact (incidental and infrequent group contact) are persons not directly responsible for the youth but who may provide incidental transportation or invite a youth to an event such as dinner, movie, sports event, weekend activity, or travel approved by the Host Family and YEO if youth is Rotary Youth Exchange Student. Once again, casual contact must be infrequent and incidental so that a regular pattern is not developed. Further, casual contact must take place in a group setting with no reasonably foreseeable risk of abuse or harassment.

**Casual Contact Overnight Travel (within District boundaries)** - These include occasions that may include trips of up to 72-hours duration, in which the youth will be in the care and custody of an adult who is not a screened volunteer.

**Prohibited Person** - A person prohibited from participating in a Rotary youth program is anyone who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in sexual abuse, sexual harassment or neglect.

Any person involved in Rotary against whom an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment is made must be removed from all contact with youth until the matter is resolved. (ROP 2.120.8)

A club must terminate the membership of any individual who admits to, is convicted of or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment of youth or youth program participants. A Rotarian or non-Rotary volunteer who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or sexual harassment or other act of moral turpitude must be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. A club may not grant membership to a person who is known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment. (Upon obtaining information that a club has knowingly failed to terminate the membership of such an individual, the RI Board may terminate the club for failure to comply). (ROP 2.120.9)

**Protected Person** - Protected person means a youth or other vulnerable person, and "Youth" means any person less than 18 years of age involved in a Rotary program (such as RYE, RYLA, INTERACT or any other community or youth service project), activity or event and to whom Rotary may have a duty of care, and specifically includes children. Exchange students over the age of 18 are covered within this policy as adults.

**Volunteer** - Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who interacts directly with youth, whether supervised or unsupervised.

For Youth Exchange, volunteers include, among others, club and district Youth Exchange officers and committee members; Rotarian counselors; Rotarians and non-Rotarians and their spouses and partners who work with students during Rotary activities or outings or who transport students to Rotary events; and host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including host siblings and other family members.

**Youth Program Participant** - Anyone who participates in a Rotary youth program, whether child or adult.

**Vulnerable Person - A**nyone who is elderly, physically or mentally disabled or infirmed, or suffering from any sort of disability that might render him or her in need of protection or care, who is involved in a Rotary program, activity or event and to whom Rotary may have a duty of care.

**For additional information see Appendix “A” Indicators of Abuse – Definition of Child Abuse & Neglect**

# **6. Incorporation and Liability Insurance**

District 6510 youth program carry liability insurance with appropriate coverage and policy limits. This policy protects the organization from third-party claims and lawsuits alleging negligence by the organization, its employees, or its volunteers.

# **Club Commitments**

The district governor is responsible for supervision and control of all youth activities in the district, including those associated with Rotary Youth Exchange. District 6510 will monitor all participating clubs and ensure that they comply with youth protection and Rotary Youth Exchange certification requirements.

It is recommended that all clubs that participate in Rotary Youth Programs, or club/family activities, or activities that include Vulnerable Persons, assign a Club Youth Protection Officer (YPO).

All clubs that participate in Rotary Youth Programs must provide the district with a copy of the following for review and approval:

* A signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with District 6510 and RI policies
* Confirmation that volunteers will be prohibited from contact with program participants until a written application, interview, reference check, and criminal background check have been conducted and clearance for unsupervised contact with program participants has been issued
* All club materials that advertise the Youth Exchange program, including brochures, applications, policies, and websites
* List of services in the area (rape and suicide hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
* Any club youth-protection training materials

# **Club Responsibilities**

The Club President has overall responsibility for operating and coordinating all club youth activities. Appoints the Club Youth Protection Officer (YPO), and members of the Youth Protection Committee.

**For additional information see Appendix I Club Responsibilities and YPO Position Description**

**9. Volunteer Selection and Screening**

All Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers interested in working with youth program participants must meet RI and District eligibility requirements. RI prohibits membership and participation of any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment.

All Rotarians and non-Rotarian Volunteers must complete the on-line Youth Protection Awareness training course.

All Volunteers who will have continued contact with youth must meet the following requirements:

* Complete the youth program volunteer application / affidavit, which authorizes the District to conduct a criminal background check
* Undergo a criminal background check –
	+ The District Youth Exchange Compliance Officer will conduct criminal background checks on all Rotarian and Non-Rotarian volunteers who are 18 or older, involved in youth activities.
	+ Criminal background checks (CBC’s) are for Criminal History and National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)
* Be interviewed, preferably in person (optional).
* Comply with RI and District guidelines for Rotary Youth Programs

**Host Families –** Youth Exchange host families must also meet these selection and screening requirements:

* Undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability, demonstrating:
	+ Commitment to the safety and security of students
	+ Appropriate motives for hosting a student that are consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
	+ Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student
	+ Ability to provide appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student’s well-being
* Complete a written application
* Undergo home visits with and without notice, both before and during the placement; home visits must be conducted annually, even for repeat host families

**Note:** All adult residents of the host home must meet all selection and screening guidelines. This includes adult children of the host family and other members of the extended family or household staff who are fulltime or part-time residents of the home.

For those who are involved in Rotary Youth Exchange, records will be retained in the YEAH system. For those involved in all other Rotary Youth Programs, the records will be maintained within club administration.

**Rotarian Counselors -** Youth Exchange students (both Inbound and Outbound) must be appointed a Rotarian counselor who meets the criteria for all volunteers. Also:

* A counselor must not be a member of the student’s host family. It is also recommended that counselors not hold another role of authority with respect to the student’s exchange (e.g., school principal, club president, district Youth Exchange chair).
* Counselors must be able to respond to any problems or concerns that may arise, including instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

**10. Participant Selection and Screening**

All students interested in the District 6510 Youth Exchange program must meet district guidelines and:

* Complete a written application
* Be interviewed at club and/or district levels
* Attend and participate in all club and district orientation and training sessions

All parents or legal guardians of Youth Exchange participants must also be interviewed at the club and/or district level to determine the student’s suitability for program participation.

**11. Training**

**Youth Protection Training** – All Rotarians in District 6510 must complete the online Youth Protection Awareness training provided by NAYEN or other District approved training, every four years for ALL Rotarians and volunteers. Our Volunteer Application has been updated with the required data fields for requesting a CBC and should be in compliance with FCRA requirements.

**Club Training**. District 6510 and member clubs may provide youth-protection training and information on youth programs.

**Youth Exchange Program Participants** - District 6510 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Exchange program participants, Rotarians and non-Rotarian volunteers. The District Youth Protection Officer will coordinate the training sessions with the Inbound and Outbound Coordinators.

District 6510 will:

* Adapt the Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual (Updated 29-Apr-2013) to include relevant information on specific district guidelines, local customs, cultural issues, and legal requirements.
* Develop a calendar for training and define the frequency of training required for each volunteer position, including descriptions of who is to participate, when training should occur, and how training will be conducted.
* Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth Exchange Program participants:
	+ District Governor
	+ District Youth Exchange committee members
	+ Club Youth Exchange committee members.
	+ Rotarian Counselors
	+ Other Rotarians and non- Rotarians who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours or district events.
	+ Host families
	+ Students (outbound and inbound)
	+ Parents and legal guardians of students
* Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance.

**Youth Protection Management System**

Provides record keeping procedures at the District level in accordance with the screening of all volunteers and the tracking of Youth Exchange Students where response to reports of harassment has been made.

Will develop and maintain a substantial training component introduced to support the harassment prevention guidelines with targeted materials for district and club leaders, host families, students, and their parents.

# **12. Allegation Handling and Follow-Through**

District 6510 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will handle them in accordance with the Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines. When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of a complainant. Club members who become aware of the allegation should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any investigation. Club members who become aware of the allegation should be cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matter during the investigation.

**All allegations of sexual abuse or harassment must be reported to RI by a District Officer. These reports must be made within 72 hours (within 24 hours in the case of serious incidents).**

The district will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with official investigations when conducting its own independent review.

District 6510 may appoint a youth protection officer or district review committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations regularly.

**For additional information see Appendix “B” Reporting Guidelines for Allegations of Abuse or Harassment & Appendix “C” Receiving A Report From A Complainant**

**13. Travel by Youth**

Youth travel outside of the local community must comply with youth protection policies.

For all youth travel sponsored by District 6510 or its clubs, the following will be done before departure:

* Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians of program participants
* Give parents and legal guardians details about the travel, including locations, accommodations, itineraries, and the organizer’s contact information
* When traveling more than 150 miles, or 240 kilometers, from the residence, verify that program participants have adequate insurance, including benefits for medical services, emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, and legal liability
* All adults who supervise youth at overnight Rotary events must be screened and vetted volunteers.

For the travel of Youth Exchange students outside their host communities, either with their host families or to attend Rotary events, District 6510 shall obtain written permission from the students’ parents or legal guardians.

For all other Youth Exchange student travel that is not customarily a part of the exchange program, organizers must:

* Receive authorization from District 6510 in advance
* Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians for travel outside of the local host community (traveling more than 150 miles, or 240 kilometers, from the residence).
* Provide parents or legal guardians details about the trip, including locations, accommodations, itineraries, and the organizer’s contact information

**For additional information see Appendix “F“ Travel for Youth**

# **14. District Youth Exchange Administration**

The District 6510 Youth Exchange program, in collaboration with participating clubs, must also:

* Confirm that all inbound students have insurance that meets or exceeds what is prescribed in the Rotary Code of Policies.
* Store participant and volunteer records securely in the Youth Exchange Administrative Hub (YEAH) for 10 years after participation, in accordance with all applicable privacy laws.
* Exchange Student Emergency Contact *(RCOP 41.060.13. Preparation) (November 2009 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 56)*
	+ Provide each student a list of local services (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.). This list must include the following district and club contacts:
	+ For inbound students: Rotarian counselor, host club president, host district Youth Exchange chair, and host district governor
	+ For outbound students: Rotarian counselor, sponsor club president, sponsor district Youth Exchange chair, sponsor district governor
	+ Local resources, suicide prevention hotlines, rape crisis hotlines, and local child protection agencies.
* Provide each student with the names and contact information of at least two non-Rotarian resource people — one male and one female, who are not related to each other and do not have close ties to the host families or Rotarian counselor — who can help the students with any problems.
	+ Submit inbound program participants’ data to RI before or shortly after the exchange begins.
	+ Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to students.
	+ Report all serious incidents (abuse or harassment allegations, accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI Youth Exchange staff within 72 hours.
	+ Prohibit placement of students outside of the district Youth Exchange program structure (“backdoor” exchanges).
	+ Establish criteria and procedures for a student’s removal from the host family and arrange for contingent temporary housing in advance.
	+ Develop contingency hosting plans that include prescreened families.
	+ Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host inbound students.
* Ensure that long-term program participants have multiple host families. It is recommended that long-term program participants be placed with three host families during their exchange.
* Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
* Request a monthly report from each inbound and outbound program participant that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange chair can then review the reports and assist program participants as needed.

**15. District Commitments to Youth Protection**

District 6510 Youth Exchange Committee Commitments (as applies to the Youth Exchange Program), extended to the Chairpersons for RYE, RYLA, and INTERACT where applicable. In accordance with its moral, ethical, and legal obligations, insofar as possible.

**For additional information see Appendix “H“ District Commitment to Youth Protection**

# **16. Conflict Resolution**

Conflicts or disagreements that may occur between parties responsible for the implementation of this policy or these procedures contained herein shall be arbitrated by the District Youth Protection Officer or other individual designated by the District Governor

**For additional information see Appendix “D“ Recommendations to Clubs - Preventing Abuse & Harassment**

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL’S STATEMENT OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH**

**Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians’ spouses and partners, and all other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come in contact with and protect them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.**

*Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, November 2006*

**17. Summary**

It is of particular importance to note that this policy for the prevention of abuse and harassment is intended to be all inclusive with regard to all participants in the Youth Exchange Program. The policy is set in place to achieve RI Certification Youth Exchange requirements and is intended to directly apply to RYE, RYLA, and INTERACT for the following\ purposes:

* To protect and prevent all youth program participants from abuse and harassment as defined within this policy.
* To collectively achieve affirmation of the integrity and credibility of all Rotarians and non- Rotarian volunteers who work within the District 6510 Youth Programs.
* To ensure the credibility and enhance the operation of the District 6510 Youth Programs for both parents and prospective youth candidates.

This policy is designed to formalize, bring to a higher level of awareness, the procedures, and behaviors which we as Rotarians currently endorse and practice as we work within the Youth Exchange and other Rotary Youth Programs. Thus, societal expectations for program delivery within the Youth Exchange Program and other Rotary Youth Programs are more clearly addressed and substantiated within our community service and practice as Rotarians.