

Rotary International District 9780

Youth Protection Policy

August 2024

1. PRINCIPLES OF THIS POLICY

1.1 Youth Programs

District 9780 supports the programs of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation, together with any District programs approved by the Board from time to time. District youth programs include, but are not limited to, Interact, RYLA, RYPEN, and Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE).

1.2 Introduction to this Policy

This Youth Protection Policy applies to those Rotary members and non-Rotary members who participate in D9780 Rotary Youth Programs. The summary is in accordance with rules and procedures set out in the Rotary International Youth Protection Guide and the expectations of our insurers. As Rotaract and Rotaract members are now considered part of Rotary, where reference is made to Rotary club or Rotary member in this policy, the terms include Rotaract clubs and Rotaractors. This policy also complies with legislative requirements mandated by the Victorian Government. Additional requirements might be necessary to conform with applicable legislation in South Australia

These requirements apply to all adult persons working with young people entrusted to their care and must be adhered to.

This Policy is the overarching policy for all Youth Protection matters. It should be read in conjunction with Guidelines and related documentation specific to individual Rotary Youth Programs, which provide additional detail on procedures relevant to those programs.

Rotary District 9780 wholeheartedly adopts the principles and practices of:

- a) The Rotary 4-Way Test
- b) The Rotary Code of Conduct
- c) The Rotary Charter for Child Protection

1.3 Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth

Rotary District 9780 strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all young people who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability Rotary members, spouses, 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.

1.4 Charter for Child Protection

1. Rotary International will not tolerate any form of abuse or harassment.
2. All children have the right to live free from harassment, intimidation, and abuse.
3. Breaking the silence on this issue is a responsible approach to this matter.
4. Allegations by children regarding breaches of this issue will be responded to promptly and with sensitivity.
5. Rotary Clubs and District Committees when planning and carrying out activities involving children will adhere to relevant legislation.
6. Appropriate 'Risk Assessment' and reporting procedures are to be established, including appropriate training programs.
7. Rotary's Youth Programs should be conducted in a professional manner, sensitive to all relevant issues.
8. A 'child' is a person under the age of eighteen years.
9. This Charter shall apply to all relevant programs of Rotary where Rotary members are involved in a 'person in authority' role.
10. Harassment and abuse prevention is a serious concern of youth programs around the world, including those sponsored by Rotary. A multi-faceted approach incorporates proper screening of host families, mandatory training and education of youth mentors and counsellors and effective management of abuse situations. Although harassment and sexual abuse cannot be uniformly prevented, it can be lessened through protective measures enacted by all volunteers who deal with youth. The safety and well-being of participants in Rotary programs and projects must always be the first priority.
11. Every Rotarian in D9780 will acknowledge by signing the **D9780 Code of Conduct** that they have read and understand the requirements of the District's commitment to a having a safe environment for all children.

1.4.1 Rotary International notes on Charter for Child Protection

All Rotary members and non-member volunteers who are interested in working with youth program participants must meet RI and District eligibility requirements. RI prohibits the membership and participation of any Rotary member or non-Rotary volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been known to have engaged in sexual abuse or sexual harassment or other act that violates the accepted standard of behaviour in the community.

District 9780 will maintain confidential records of individuals prohibited from contact with youth and make sure that these prohibitions are implemented consistently throughout the District from year to year. People who are prohibited from working with youth also may not serve as District Interact Chair, Interact Club Adviser, District RYLA Chair, District Youth Exchange Chair, District Youth Protection Officer, or in any other locally appointed Club or District role in which they might have contact with youth.

If a person is accused of sexual abuse or harassment and law enforcement's investigation is inconclusive, or if law enforcement declines to investigate, additional safeguards are necessary to protect any youth program participants with whom the accused might have future contact, as well as the accused. A person who has been cleared of charges may apply to continue as a youth program volunteer. Such reinstatement is not a right, and reinstatement to a former position is not guaranteed.

1.5 Reporting Procedure

District 9780 reports all serious incidents, which includes, but is not limited to medical emergencies, accidents, early returns, deaths, abuse and harassment, to RI through the online reporting hub <https://ri.isight.com/portal> or emailing youthprotection@rotary.org or at My Rotary Youth Protection page:

<https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/learntopic/youth-protection>

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Child	A child in a Rotary youth program under the age of 18 years.
2.2 Young person	A young person in a Rotary youth program under the age of 25 years.
2.3 Youth	For the purposes of this policy, a youth may be any young person involved in a Rotary program (e.g., Rotary Youth Exchange, Interact, community service or youth service program or project beneficiary, etc) that is primarily focused on youth, regardless of whether they are of the age of majority and to whom Rotary may have a Duty of Care. This specifically includes children, who by law in Australia are generally defined as anyone under the age of 18 years. In most instances, a youth will be referred to as a student in this policy, without limiting the generality of the above definition.

D9780 policy – Youth Protection

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2.4 RI	Rotary International
2.5 Rotary	For the purpose of this policy the term Rotary includes Rotaract
2.6 Rotary member	For the purpose of this policy the term Rotary member includes Rotarian and Rotaractor.
2.7 RYE	Rotary Youth Exchange
2.8 RYP	Rotary Youth Program
2.9 Volunteer	An adult involved in Rotary Youth Programs who has direct interaction either supervised or unsupervised with young people in a Rotary Youth Program. This includes but is not limited to, Rotary members and non-Rotary members, their spouses, partners, adult family or friends who may: a) host students in their homes and/or for activities or outings b) drive students to and from events or functions, c) are Club and District Officers, Counsellors or Committee Members for i. Interact ii. Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) iii. Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment (RYPEN) iv. Rotary Youth Exchange or v. Other programs
2.10 Responsible Adult	A responsible adult is any adult who, in a family or group situation for a short period of time, is responsible for caring for a child or young person, including school students.
2.11 Youth Program Participant	Any individual who is participating in a Rotary Youth Program regardless of whether he or she is of legal age of majority, also referred to in this document as young people, children, child, youth, student or young person.
2.12 DIO	District Insurance Officer
2.13 CYPO	Club Youth Protection Officer a. The Club Youth Protection Officer is an appropriate member in the Club who must not be the New Generations Director, the Youth Exchange Student Counsellor, the Rotary Adviser to an Interact Club or a member of any District Committee that deals with programs for New Generations. b. The duties of the Club Youth Protection Officer, include but are not limited to: c. a. maintaining and safeguarding a register of WWCC information d. – including the name of the person to whom the WWCC has been issued, the number and expiry date of the card. e. maintaining and safeguarding a register of Youth Volunteer

	f. Information and Declaration forms. Originals to be kept by the club and copies to be sent to the District Youth Protection Officer. g. e. ensuring all of the Club duties in relation to hosting and/or sponsoring a Youth Exchange student have been carried out before, during and after the period of exchange. h. completion and return of relevant check list, declarations and forms to the District Youth Protection Officer and District Youth Exchange Committee i. CYPO should be aware that failure to adhere to these responsibilities may negate insurance coverage of club activities and possibly place the club at risk of legal action.
2.14 DYPO	District Youth Protection Officer
2.15 DYPC	District Youth Protection Committee
2.15.1	The District 9780 Youth Protection Committee will consist of a minimum of three adults to be drawn from the following: - i. The District Governor ii. The District Governor Elect iii. The District Governor Nominee. iv. A Rotary member appointed by the District Governor to the position of Youth Protection Officer, (The DYPO may appoint an assistant to assist with administrative tasks) v. Other members, appointed or co-opted as the need arises, should include, where possible, at least one non-Rotarian and be from the following – a. The District Committee Chairman/Representative of the program/program involved in the investigation, complaint or allegation b. The Club President; c. A Senior Police Officer; d. A Member with legal qualifications; e. A Member with qualifications and/or experience in counselling. vi. Should the District Governor be the subject of the complaint the immediate Past District Governor, who is available at the time, will be consulted. vii. Should the relevant Youth Protection Officer be the subject of the complaint, a senior Rotary member with relevant District experience, will be consulted.

2.15.2	The duties of the District Youth Protection Committee include, but are not limited to: I. investigating all allegations of sexual abuse or harassment not investigated by the police. II. in matters where the Police do not consider an investigation is warranted, the District Youth Protection Committee will conduct an internal review of its policies and procedures to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in the future. III. ensuring any incidents of sexual harassment or abuse are correctly dealt with in accordance with Rotary International's "Sexual Harassment and Abuse Reporting Guidelines" and with Rotary District 9780's Youth Protection Policy. IV. arranging an independent qualified counsellor as needed for any student who has been sexually harassed or abused – where possible, this should be a non-Rotary member. V. reporting all allegations of sexual harassment or abuse to the District Governor. VI. reporting incidences of sexual harassment or allegations or abuse to Rotary International through the Manager, Norwest Office of Rotary International
2.16 WWC	Working with Children Card is the terminology used for a criminal history check in Victoria and South Australia confirming that there is nothing adverse known to Police that would prevent the person working with children.

3. Requirements Relating to Allegations of Abuse

District 9780 will handle allegations of abuse and harassment seriously, in accordance with the District's Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

Young people who have been abused might be mentally traumatised and find it very difficult to talk of their experience. If they are to make a full disclosure, it is critical for those they may approach to treat them with care and compassion.

3.1 All adults who Rotary recommends a young person may contact if abused, will be briefed and given the RI list of common-sense responses to follow should this happen.

3.2 The process following the advice of an allegation shall be:

- a) Ensure the safety of the young person
- b) Persuade them to go promptly (so forensic evidence if available is not lost) with them to the police

- c) Notify the District Governor or if unavailable the District Youth Protection Officer
- d) Report any incident or allegations to RI within 72 hours using the secure online reporting hub <https://ri.i-sight.com/portal> or by emailing youthprotection@rotary.org.
- e) Notify District 9780 insurer Aon directly and the District Insurance Officer.

Do Not- a) contact the accused
b) talk about or tell others

3.3 In all matters where the police are involved, Rotary will fully support and allow them to investigate and report.

3.4 Where the police do not wish to investigate, the District will conduct a thorough investigation using experts outside Rotary as necessary or as requested by the victim or the victim's legal guardians.

3.5 All Rotary members and those assisting in RYPs are to be aware of behavioural and mood changes among young people. Such changes might be the result of sexual abuse or harassment. If such changes are recognised, investigation of the possible cause should be tactfully undertaken calling upon outside professional assistance if needed.

4. Requirements Specific to Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE)

Youth Exchange Students are to be admired. At an early age they have shown the maturity to leave their family and friends to travel and study in another country where they know nobody. Assimilation to a new culture and in most instances a new language requires our help and understanding.

4.1 All Rotary members and non-Rotary members involved in District 9780 Youth Exchange Program must operate completely within the guidelines contained in the Club Counsellor and Host Families Manual, Youth Exchange Program District 9780 and associated documents, as supplied to them by the District 9780 Youth Exchange Committee. The following policies relate to the protection of students participating in the Youth Exchange Program. Full details of policy requirements specific to Rotary Youth Exchange can be obtained through the D9780 Youth Exchange Committee.

4.2 All Rotary member and non-member Youth Exchange volunteers who have direct, unsupervised contact with Youth Exchange Program participants must:

- Hold a current WWCC as per Victorian or South Australian law
- Complete a District 9780 Rotary Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration form, providing a list of 3 referees (who may not include family and only one Rotary member).



- Be interviewed in person by an authorized Club Representative or Youth Exchange Committee Chairperson.
- Comply with RI and District 9780 guidelines for the Youth Exchange program as outlined in the Club Counsellor and Host Families Manual, Youth Exchange Program District 9780

4.3 Rotary Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration Form may periodically require updating due to change of circumstances. Rotary Youth Declaration forms should be renewed every 3 years. The onus is on the individual Rotary member, in association with their Club or Rotary program to ensure the details held by District are up to date.

5. For More information refer to the following resources:

1. Rotary International – Rotary Youth Protection Guide
2. RI Online training “Protecting Youth Program Participants”.
3. Rotary International Zone 8 Insurance Committee
4. Aon Risk Solution
5. District Youth Protection Policy and Manuals