



# **ROTARY DISTRICT 5030 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

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# ROTARY DISTRICT 5030 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

## Introduction

Rotary has an excellent record of supporting youth through Rotary Youth Exchange, RYLA, Rotaract, Interact, scholarship programs, mentoring and literacy initiatives, and other youth programs. In orchestrating events and programs involving youth, Rotary clubs in District 5030 shall adopt and enforce the following Rotary Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth, which has been adopted by the RI Board of Directors, as well as other Rotary Code of Policy provisions on this subject that are included in this document.

These policies and guidelines apply to all District 5030 Rotary Clubs and supersede all individual Club's Youth Protection Policies. This policy is incorporated by reference into the District 5030 Policy Manual. All clubs that wish to participate in youth programs must comply with the guidelines described in this document and the attached Appendix. Noncompliance may result in removal of Rotary International charter approval for the club.

## 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 other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

Rotary International requires all Rotary Clubs worldwide to address the issue of youth protection, and to establish policies to protect the safety and well being of all who participate in Rotary youth programs. We are committed to these values and principles.

## Definitions

**Youth:** Any person under age 18.

**Rotary Youth Service (RYS):** All club and district activities involving youth including but not limited to Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), Rotaract, and Interact.

**Volunteer:** Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Service and Rotary-sponsored youth programs who has contact with youth is a volunteer. This includes, but is not limited to Rotarians and/or their spouses or partners, and other non-Rotarian volunteers.

## Types of Volunteer Contact with Youth

- **Frequent and Recurring Contact**

Persons having frequent and recurring contact are individuals who have an ongoing role in a Rotary Youth program, such as Rotarians who are Interact Liaisons, RYLA counselors who work closely with RYLA participants, or individuals who provide transportation to youth to or

from meetings or events on a regular basis. These individuals must complete the screening and training procedures for volunteers. See the Rotary Youth Exchange Policy for requirements concerning volunteers working with or hosting exchange students.

- **Infrequent or Occasional Contact**

Volunteers who have infrequent or occasional contact are individuals who are not directly responsible for Rotary youth program participants, but who might provide incidental transportation or invite a youth to an event such as an Interact community service event, RYLA conference, dinner, movie, sports event, or other weekend activity. This type of contact must be infrequent and incidental so that a regular pattern is not developed. Further, it must take place in a group setting with no reasonably foreseeable risk of abuse or harassment. Persons having casual contact with youth are not required to be screened or to complete youth protection training. However, District 5030 recommends that three or more people (any combination of students and adults) are present during any outing that is characterized as infrequent or occasional contact with a youth.

- **Overnight Travel and Accommodations**

This policy will permit a young person under age 18 to take advantage of group overnight opportunities that might occur such as attending a Rotary District Conference or participating in a ski weekend, in which the youth will be in the care and custody of either a screened volunteer or an adult who has not been screened. For overnight travel to be permitted, the Youth Service Protection Officer for the applicable program (Youth Exchange, Interact, etc.) must approve the overnight travel and accommodations. If under the care of an unscreened adult, the Youth Protection Officer must decide that the unscreened adult appears to be responsible and trustworthy and understands that he or she must treat the youth as would a conscientious parent caring for the welfare of their own child, and that the proposed activity does not present significant risk of abuse. If overnight hotel accommodations are required, unless the youth is a Rotary Youth Exchange student who may stay with a member of their host family, the youth will share a room with other youth participants of the same gender or will be provided an individual room. These guidelines must be followed, otherwise the proposed activity will not be permitted. It is understood that no activity can be totally free of risk and the objective of this policy is to minimize risk for all parties.

## **Screening of Rotary Youth Service Volunteers**

The following screening steps must be completed prior to participation in youth activities.

### **Rotary Youth Exchange**

Volunteer and host families must complete the appropriate screening processes for their particular roles in accordance with Rotary International, governmental requirements, and the District policies as stated above. **See the District 5030 Youth Exchange Youth Protection Policy for additional information and requirements.** Compliance with these requirements shall be documented in the YEAH system (Youth Exchange Administrative Hub).

## **Interact, RYLA, Rotaract and Other Youth Programs**

All volunteers who will have frequent and recurring contact with youth must:

- Complete a volunteer application (**Appendix C**)
- Undergo personal interviews
- Have completed three documented reference checks (**Appendix D**)
- Undergo a background/criminal record check (**Appendix D**)
- Complete Youth Protection Awareness Training

### **Management of Screening Process**

The Youth Protection Officer for each RYS Program (Interact, RYLA, etc.) is responsible for managing the screening process for volunteers for that program. As well, the Youth Protection Officer may appoint one Rotarian or non-Rotarian who will maintain all records including volunteer applications, references, criminal background checks, and training results.

### **Person Prohibited from Volunteering for Rotary Youth Service**

A person prohibited from participating in RYS is anyone who:

- Has been convicted of any offense which resulted in harm to an individual, including, but not limited to assault, sexual assault, sexual harassment or neglect,
- Has been convicted of any offense which, in the opinion of the District Youth Protection Officer, suggests an unacceptable risk of harm to a person in the care of that individual, or
- Is a person subject to a court order or decree prohibiting that person in being in contact with another individual or being at a specific location.

## **Training**

Rotary District 5030 will provide youth protection awareness (i.e. abuse and harassment prevention) training for all youth program volunteers via the Youth Protection Awareness training available online. Youth Protection Officers must complete this training every three years.

## **District 5030 Youth Protection Officers**

### **Youth Protection Officers for Rotary Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact & Rotaract**

Youth Protection Officers for each of the four Rotary International Youth Service Programs (Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact & Rotaract) are appointed by District 5030. These individuals are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all volunteers who will have recurring and ongoing contact with youth are screened and that they successfully complete the youth protection training sponsored by the District before the adult participates in youth activities.

- Maintenance of documentation and safe keeping of records for ten years.

### **District Youth Protection Officer**

The District Youth Protection Officer reports to the District Governor in conjunction with the District Compliance Officer and is responsible for risk management and due diligence to ensure that District policy and procedures are followed for Youth Exchange, RYLA, Rotaract, and Interact volunteers who have frequent and recurring contact with youth program participants.

#### **Additional Responsibilities:**

- Obtain Club Youth Protection Compliance Forms (**Appendix E**) from all District 5030 clubs within 30 days of the new Rotary year. The District Youth Protection Officer shall submit a report to the District Governor and District Compliance Officer summarizing the receipt of all compliance forms received by July 31 of each year.
- Inform the District Governor and District Compliance Officer of any allegation of sexual abuse or harassment made by or on behalf of a youth program participant. Maintain records of all allegations made and ensure proper handling of allegations, according to local laws and district policy, and protection of the interests of all involved.
- Ensure that Volunteer Applications, background checks, and references for adult volunteers working with youth are maintained for at least ten years.

## **Sexual Abuse and Harassment**

### **Rotary International and District 5030 Policy Against Sexual Abuse and Harassment**

Rotary International has a zero-tolerance policy against abuse and harassment. The District Governor of 5030, District Youth Service Chairperson, and District Youth Protection Officer will make every prudent and reasonable effort to ensure that no youth program participant is subjected to harassment or abuse in the context of Rotary activities and the District will take appropriate action if such behavior occurs.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse refers to engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a youth, or forcing or encouraging a youth to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same sex or the opposite sex.

Examples of sexual abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Any deliberate touching of sexual areas
- Non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure, or exposing a minor or student to sexual or pornographic material

#### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or "groom" their victims.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct
- Gossip regarding one's sex life, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures
- Sexual leering or whistling
- Any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching
- Obscene language or gestures and suggestive or insulting comments

## ***Guidelines for Recording and Reporting an Allegation of Sexual Abuse or Harassment***

*For use by all adults to whom a youth reports an incident of abuse, harassment, or neglect.*

### **Recording a Description of the Allegations**

- **Listen attentively and stay calm.** Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse. It is appropriate to be supportive. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.
- **Assure privacy and discuss the limits of confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse and/or harassment to make it stop.
- **Get the facts, but do not interrogate.** Ask the youth questions that establish what happened and who was involved. Reassure the youth that he/she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking “why” questions. Your responsibility is to present the youth's story to the proper authorities.
- **Be non-judgmental and reassure the youth involved.** Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who might be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the youth. Assure the youth that they were brave and mature to come to you.
- **Record:** Keep a written record of the conversation with the youth as soon as possible, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the youth's words and record only what has been told to you. **KEEP TO THE FACTS AND DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR OPINIONS.**
- **Confidentiality:** Do not contact the person who is being accused of abuse or harassment. Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the youth and the accused during the investigation.

### **Protecting Youth**

To ensure the safety and well-being of the youth involved, immediately remove the youth from the situation and all contact with the alleged perpetrator. Give reassurance that this is for the youth's safety and is not a punishment.

### **Reporting Allegations**

The adult to whom the allegations were reported must immediately contact the applicable Youth Protection Officer, who in turn must immediately contact the District Youth Protection Officer, whose name and contact information are available in **Appendix F**.



If the allegation involves an exchange student, the District Youth Protection Officer and/or the Youth Exchange Committee Chair must report any allegation immediately to the District Governor, who will then report to Rotary International within 72 hours. In addition, the Youth Exchange Committee Chair must report the allegation to their responsible officer.

The Youth Protection Officer and an attorney (determined by the severity of the allegation), should quickly meet with the parties to determine what steps should be taken to safeguard the well-being of the youth involved. These activities should be completed in confidentiality to protect the reputations of all the parties involved until decisions are made and actions are taken.

It is probable that even if a claim of sexual abuse, harassment, or neglect were not substantiated, there would be no way that the youth could be returned to the original situation. Other arrangements must be made.

Allegations of criminal abuse or harassment must be reported to local police authorities for investigation. Investigations must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment (harassment that does not meet the criminal measure of intent and/or proof beyond reasonable doubt), the District Youth Protection Officer, and District Governor are responsible for any necessary follow-up.

### **Post Reporting Procedures**

*For use by District Youth Protection Officer:*

- Confirm that the youth has been removed from the situation immediately and has no further contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
- Make sure all Allegation Reporting guidelines are followed.
- Ensure the youth receives immediate support services. If available, offer the youth an independent, professional counselor to represent the interests of the youth.
- In the case involving a Rotary Youth Exchange student, the Rotary country contact officer shall contact the youth's parents or legal guardians and will outline the steps taken to safeguard the health and well-being of the youth(s).
- Keep the District Governor informed of initial and follow up action.
- A club must terminate the membership of any Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of or is otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment. A non-Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise found to have engaged in

sexual abuse or harassment 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 a Rotarian, the RI Board will take steps to have the Rotarian's membership terminated, including action to terminate the club's charter for failure to comply.)

- If an investigation into a claim of sexual abuse or harassment is inconclusive, then, for the safety of youth participants and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. If there are subsequent claims of sexual abuse or harassment, the adult shall be permanently prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt, the continued presence of the adult could be detrimental to the reputation of the organization and could be harmful to youth. It can also benefit the adult in preventing additional accusations from other youth. A person who is accused but later cleared of charges, may apply to be reinstated to participate in youth programs. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position.
- Upon obtaining information that a club has failed to address an allegation against a member in connection with a Rotary-related youth program for violating applicable law regarding the protection of youth, the board may suspend or terminate the membership of the club in accordance with RI Bylaws section 3.030.3.

### **Response for Addressing Issues Within the Rotary Club for Allegations Made Against Rotarians or Non-Rotarians**

- Club members might experience ambiguity toward their roles and might feel unclear regarding their boundaries. They need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the youth of their support at all times. Club members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police investigations. Comments made about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers do not support our statement of conduct or Rotary ideals. Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to a slander or libel claim filed against Rotarians or Clubs by the alleged abuser.

**ROTARY DISTRICT 5030 YOUTH SERVICE  
VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

Applicant Information			
Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Date
Address		Apartment/Unit #	
City	State	ZIP	
Date of Birth	Phone	Email Address	
Drivers License No.	Are you a member of a Rotary Club?	If yes, Name of Club & Year Joined	

VOLUNTEER HISTORY WITH YOUTH for past 5 years (attach additional sheets if necessary)	
Organization Name Address City, State & Zip Position & Dates Held	Organization Name Address City, State & Zip Position & Dates Held

VOLUNTEER qualifications & training
What relevant qualifications and training do you have for this position? Please describe in full.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY for past 5 years (attach additional sheets if necessary)	
Current Employer Address City, State & Zip Position & Dates of Employment Supervisor's Name & Phone	Prior Employer Address City, State & Zip Position & Dates of Employment Supervisor's Name & Phone
Prior Employer Address City, State & Zip Position & Dates of Employment Supervisor's Name & Phone	Prior Employer Address City, State & Zip Position & Dates of Employment Supervisor's Name & Phone

PERSONAL REFERENCES (may not be relatives & no more than one Rotarian reference please)	
Name Relationship Address City, State & Zip Phone	Name Relationship Address City, State & Zip Phone

**CRIMINAL HISTORY**

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to any crime(s)?

Have you ever been subject to court order, including civil, family or criminal courts involving sexual, physical or verbal abuse, including but not limited to domestic violence, civil harassment injunction or protective order?

If yes, please explain. Indicate dates(s) and the country and state in which each event occurred. Attach a separate sheet if needed.

**APPLICANT CERTIFICATION**

I acknowledge that Rotary District 5030 is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in our Youth Programs and that it is the duty of all Rotarians, their spouse and/or partner, and any other volunteers, to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of young people involved in Rotary programs and activities, and to prevent any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of youth participants. I understand that participation as a volunteer for a Rotary District 5030 Youth Program requires that I participate in Youth Protection training and pass an exam at the conclusion of the training.

I certify that all of the statements in this application, and any attachments, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I have not withheld any information that would affect my application unfavorably. I understand that Rotary District 5030 will deny a volunteer position to anyone convicted of a crime of violence. I give my permission to Rotary District 5030 to verify information contained in this application including background checks and driving records, contact with my former employers, and with references provided. I understand that the information provided will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for a volunteer position with Rotary District 5030, and that as long as I remain a volunteer, this information may be checked again at any time. I acknowledge that I will have an opportunity to review the background check received, and if I dispute it, a procedure is available for clarification.

In consideration of my acceptance and participation in Rotary District 5030 Youth Programs, I hereby release and agree to save, hold harmless, and indemnify all members, officers, directors, committee members, employees of the participating Rotary clubs and districts, and of Rotary International ("Indemnities"), from any and all liability for any loss, property damage, personal injury, or death, including any such liability that might arise out of the negligence of any of the indemnities or might be suffered or claimed by me as a result of an investigation of my background in connection with this application. I further agree to conform to the rules, regulations, and policies of Rotary International and Rotary District 5030 youth programs and its affiliates.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above affidavit, consent, and waiver and that I sign this form voluntarily.

Applicant's Signature	Date
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**FOR RYLA USE ONLY**

Minimum 3 references checked by \_\_\_\_\_ (name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (dates)

Background check conducted by \_\_\_\_\_ (name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Youth protection training completed and exam passed by volunteer on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## **Guidelines for Background and Reference Checks RYLA, Interact and Volunteers Working with Rotaract Members Under Age 18**

### **Criminal Background Reports and Reference Checks**

A background check should be conducted and references checked by the applicable Youth Protection Officer (RYLA, Interact, Youth Exchange or Rotaract) at the time of screening. There must be at least three documented references that are obtained before the applicant has unsupervised contact with youth. Background checks should be done every three years thereafter.

### **For which applicants do we need to obtain reference checks?**

We need to obtain them for any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who will have frequent and ongoing contact with youth. This includes, but is not limited to Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses or partners, and any other volunteer who will have frequent and ongoing contact with youth under age 18.

### **Who can be a reference?**

They may be obtained from friends, neighbors, work colleagues, employers, etc. Personal references must not be related to the applicant and there should be no more than one reference from a former or current Rotarian.

### **Where should the reference check information collected be stored?**

File the reference check information with the Volunteer Application and background check. Youth protection documentation and records should be kept for a minimum of seven years.

***Please note: Access to confidential information collected in the volunteer screening process should be restricted. Interviews and background checks might uncover sensitive information that would not disqualify a potential volunteer but should be kept confidential nonetheless.***

*Appendix D – Sample Personal Reference  
Questions for Telephone Interview*

**PERSONAL REFERENCE FOR DISTRICT 5030 YOUTH  
SERVICE VOLUNTEER**

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

How do you know (applicant)?

How long have you known him/her?

S/he has applied for a position a volunteer with a Rotary District 5030 program working directly with youth (explain position). Are you aware of (applicant) doing any similar work in the past?

Do you think s/he is well suited to the responsibilities of this position?

What do you think his/her strengths are?

Do you have any concerns about him/her doing this type of volunteer work?

Do you know of any reason we wouldn't want (applicant) to work directly with young people?

Is there anything else you think we should know about (applicant)?

Reference conducted by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix D—Sample Employment/Volunteer Reference  
Questions for Telephone Interview*

**EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION  
REFERENCE FOR ROTARY DISTRICT 5030  
YOUTH SERVICE VOLUNTEER**

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Position Held \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Held \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Director's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Verify reporting relationship, position and dates held.

Please tell me about the responsibilities of this position.

How would you describe this person's ability to full those responsibilities?

What did s/he do well in this position?

Were there any issues concerning his/her performance?

The volunteer position s/he is applying for involves working directly with youth.  
Do you know of any reason we wouldn't want (applicant) to work directly with  
young people?

What else do you think I should know about (applicant)?

(If not currently employed): Would you rehire this person if the opportunity  
became available?

Reference conducted by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **ROTARY DISTRICT 5030 CLUB YOUTH SERVICE COMPLIANCE FORM**

This form must be completed prior to participation in any District 5030 Youth Service Program and annually thereafter.

**The Rotary Club of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledges receipt and review of the following information:**

- District 5030 Rotary Youth Protection Policy
- Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leaders' Guide (available on the District Website)

**Confirms that this Rotary Club:**

- Is operating its Youth Service Programs in Accordance with Rotary International and District 5030 policies and guidelines.
- Has completed Board adoption of the District 5030 Youth Protection Policy.

**Is conducting or will conduct the following Youth Service programs/activities during this Rotary year (check all applicable):**

- Youth Exchange
- RYLA
- Rotaract
- Interact
- Other (Please explain. Attached extra sheet if needed.)

Club President Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*This form must be returned to the District Youth Protection Officer by July 31.*



**ROTARY DISTRICT 5030 YOUTH SERVICE  
CHAIRPERSONS & YOUTH PROTECTION OFFICERS**

**Youth Service Chair**

Susan Beals  
(206) 619-5809  
susanbeals@gmail.com

**District Youth Protection Officer**

Kathy Johnson  
(425) 922-3638  
kj2004@msn.com

**RYLA Chair & RYLA Youth Protection Officer**

Josh Gerstman  
(206) 550-8105  
josh.gerstman@gmail.com

**Interact Chair & Interact Youth Protection Officer**

Susan Beals (Interim)  
(206) 619-5809  
susanbeals@gmail.com

**Rotaract Chair & Rotaract Youth Protection Officer**

Mike Madden  
(206) 790-6749  
mikeminseattle@gmail.com

**Rotary Youth Exchange Chair**

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**Youth Protection Officer, Short Term Exchange Program**

Stuart VanderHoek  
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**Youth Protection Officer, Long Term Exchange Program**

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(425) 821-8395