

# Frequently Asked Questions 2/4/10

## NEW YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

### DISTRICT 5960

#### I. DEFINITIONS/CERTIFIED VOLUNTEERS

**1) Q:** I see that I will be a “Certified Volunteer” if I have “significant interaction” with youth. What are some examples of “significant interaction?” Also, what are some examples of “incidental interaction?”

**A:** “Significant interaction” would include (1) involvement with youth which would normally lead to a special confidence or trust placed in the adult by the youth, such as acting as a counselor or mentor to youth (including but not limited to Camp RYLA counselors, STRIVE Mentors and Interact Advisors); and (2) all activities where the Rotarian or adult volunteer meets repeatedly with one or more youth.

“Incidental interaction” would include (1) a one-time or isolated meeting with Youth in a group setting with other Rotarians, adults or youths, such as distributing donated dictionaries to a classroom of students where the teacher or other Rotarians are present; (2) speaking at a Rotary youth event, where contact with Youth is limited; and (3) participating in a meeting such as a Rotary Club meeting, where youth are also present.

**2) Q:** I am a 21 year old college student, and am not a Rotarian. I want to serve as a camp counselor for an upcoming Camp RYLA. Is volunteering in the role considered “significant interaction” with Youth? Do I therefore need to become a “Certified Volunteer”?

**A:** Yes it is, and yes you do. A camp counselor at an overnight Rotary-sponsored camp such as Camp RYLA has “significant interaction” with youth, and therefore would need to become a “Certified Volunteer”.

**3) Q:** I’m a Rotarian and I volunteer with my church youth group. Our church doesn’t have a youth protection policy and sometimes I mentor a youth in my church office. Is this ok?

**A:** The Youth Protection Policy applies to Rotary Youth activities only. Any programs outside of Rotary are the responsibility of that organization. We would encourage you to share our policies with an organization you work with, that does not currently have one.

**4) Q:** I work a lot with our club’s Interact program. I am certified. Sometimes my wife helps. Does she have to become certified?

**A:** Yes. If she is helping more than one time, it would be considered significant interaction.

**5) Q:** Why a minimum of four youth for overnight stays? Does that mean if we only have 3 youth, we cannot have them stay overnight? What if there are only girls on the outing – and we have 3 girls that want to stay overnight – and two adult women?

**A:** The reason is to have enough people in the room where it would be difficult for something inappropriate or an allegation of something inappropriate, to happen. For an overnight, less than 4 youth can sleep in a room if there is no adult sleeping in the room with them.

**6) Q:** Why can Certified Volunteers be one-on-one when transporting Youth Exchange students, but not any other youth in other Rotary programs?

A: The exception was made for Youth Exchange, in part because the Youth Exchange committee already has their own background check, training, and Youth Protection policy in place. Also, the prevalence in the District of clubs transporting Youth Exchange students to Rotary meetings was significant, and the committee was asked to make this exception. We will be reviewing this exception in the coming year, to see if it will remain.

**7) Q:** What if my exchange student or STRIVE student is age 18. Does the definition of Youth still apply and do we then need to abide by the no one-on-one contact requirement?

A: The definition of youth does apply to all youth in Rotary Youth activities, so even if they are over 18, they would be considered a youth in our programs, and the no one-on-one policy would apply.

**8) Q:** Where Policies of School Districts and Outside Organizations, are also involved, if a school doesn't require two volunteers of different genders to participate in an overnight outing, does the Rotary 5960 Youth Protection Policy not apply, and can our Certified Volunteer participate?

A: If the outing is a Rotary event, the Rotary 5960 Youth Protection Policies does apply and the Certified Rotary Volunteer would need to follow the Rotary Policy of two adults of different genders, even if the school does not require that. If that requirement is not met, they would not be able to participate in the outing.

**9) Q:** This is a District 5960 Youth Protection Policy. If my exchange student attends a Camp Enterprise 5950 event, will these policies apply?

A: All policies will apply to all Rotary 5960 volunteers and youth. District 5950 is reviewing our policy and may be adopting a similar one in the future. Until then, the policies of Districts outside of 5950 will govern the set up of their events, but we should maintain our policies to the fullest extent when possible.

## **II. BACKGROUND CHECKS**

**1) Q:** I am a Rotarian, and my only involvement with any youth programs through my club is helping to hand out dictionaries to the entire third grade classes in our school district. I hand out these dictionaries with other Rotarians at the schools during class time. Do I need a criminal background check to do this?

A: No, it's not required. Your contact with the children is only incidental and doesn't constitute "significant interaction". Therefore, you don't need to meet the requirements of a "Certified Volunteer". Note, though, that other Youth Protection rules do apply, including the "No One-On-One Contact" rule.

**2) Q:** If our club goes through training but the background checks have not been completed, can we still work with the youth? What should we do?

A: No. For adult volunteers with significant interaction with youth, background checks must be completed, and a response from the District office on the approval of the candidate must be received by the club. During the first year's roll out of this new policy (beginning July 1, 2010), club members working with youth must have the appropriate members "Volunteer Certified" by January 1, 2011. Volunteers that have significant interaction with youth can meet as they have been without being

“Volunteer Certified” until January 1, 2010, although we strongly encourage clubs to complete certifying sooner.

**3) Q:** Regarding background checks: Will a parking ticket or DUI disqualify you from becoming a certified volunteer? What would disqualify you? What is searched for in the background check? Who is paying for the background checks? I have one from my work, is that good enough? Can I just give you a copy?

**A:** A Background Check Taskforce committee is meeting on these items, and will have that policy in place in the coming months.

**4) Q:** I’m a Rotarian hosting a Rotary Exchange Student and I went to the Youth Exchange informational meeting in September and also sent in all the forms. Am I “Volunteer Certified” and can I work as a STRIVE mentor? Also, if I am not automatically “Volunteer Certified” from completing the background check and training done through Youth Exchange, do I need to complete an additional background check and training for this District 5960 Youth Protection Policy?

**A:** A Background Check taskforce is currently meeting to finalize these details. We do know that if a person completes a background check through District 5960’s Youth Exchange program, they will not need to complete a second one to be considered background checked.

**5) Q:** It says host families can meet with students one-on-one. Does the host family need to be certified (background checks and go through training)?

**A:** A Background Check taskforce is currently meeting to finalize these details. We do know that if a person completes a background check through District 5960’s Youth Exchange program, they will not need to complete a second one to be considered background checked.

**6) Q:** I’ve worked with youth at my church for the last 20 years. In fact for the last 3 years I’ve conducted youth protection training for our church members. Am I considered “trained”, and a certified volunteer? I’ve had about 10 background checks over the years at church does that satisfy Rotary?

**A:** No. You will need to complete Rotary’s background check, and Rotary’s training.

### **III. ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE/STRIVE**

**1) Q:** I’m a Rotarian hosting a Rotary Exchange Student and I also have met other Rotary Exchange students which are friends of the student staying with my family. Is it ok if I meet with other Youth Exchange students one-on one for a short time in my home if they come over to meet with the student staying with our family?

**A:** No. The exception for one-on-one contact for host families applies only to the student you are hosting that year.

**2) Q:** I’m a Rotarian that hosted a Rotary Exchange Student as the first host family. Our student has recently moved to another family. Is it still ok if I pick-up this student at her new family’s home and take her biking with me?

**A:** Yes.

**3) Q:** Can a Rotex volunteer pick up our club's Exchange Student to take her to a Rotary weekend event?

A: Only if there is another person in the vehicle, otherwise he or she would be violating the no one-on-one contact.

**4) Q:** Our club's YE student can get a ride to school with the neighbor boy. Is this ok?

A: If the neighbor boy is not over 18 years old, and this does not violate any of the Youth Exchange guidelines, then YES.

**5) Q:** I'm a male Rotarian and I would like to take our male club exchange student and another exchange student to the International Rotary Conference. We would stay in the same hotel room. Is this ok?

A: No. It does not meet the required minimum number of youth/ adults for overnights. Youth could stay in a separate room from the adult(s). We also encourage sending 2 adults on any significant youth activity.

**6) Q:** The policy requires us to establish "separation barriers" or privacy zones to keep sleeping areas and dressing areas separated from youth areas. What are some of the ways we can establish a "separation barrier"?

A: Examples of separated barriers or privacy zones are: a temporary blanket or sheet walls, a partition, chairs, tables, or lined up back packs. If those items are not available, then a taped line could be used. The intent is to have a clearly designated area where adults and youth are sleeping, so there is no question if an adult or youth is sleeping somewhere where they should not be. If adults and youth are changing in the same room, then a visual barrier such as a partition or sheet wall would be required.

**7) Q:** I am a Mentor in my club's Strive Scholarship program. Does this rule mean I can't meet with my youth mentee at the local coffee shop?

A: No. You may meet with your mentee at the local coffee shop as long as you are in a place where you are visible by other patrons or employees of the coffee shop. The "No One-on-One Contact" rule prohibits meeting with youth in a place where you and the youth are not visible by at least one other person.

**8) Q:** Our club sponsors high school students to attend Camp RYLA. Does this rule mean I can't drive a student out to camp?

A: The Policy prohibits you from being alone in a car with a Youth. It would be permissible for you to drive a student to Camp RYLA if either another adult or student was present in the car as well. If you need to transport 2 or more Youth, it may be helpful to arrange to pick up and drop off both students at the same location at the same time.

**HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?** More details will be covered and questions answered in the Youth Protection Training that will be available no later than May 1, 2010. Additional contacts are: Janet Newberg, volunteer District 5960 Youth Protection Officer at cell 612-810-6776 or work 651-653-4587 [janetnewberg@comcast.net](mailto:janetnewberg@comcast.net) or Andy Goke, volunteer District 5960 Youth Protection Taskforce Chair, 763-231-7231 [Agoke@northernstarbsa.org](mailto:Agoke@northernstarbsa.org)