

# YOUTH PROTECTION

## Frequently Asked Questions

Below are questions and answers associated with the [District 5580 Youth Protection Policy & Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy \(Aug 2016\)](#)

The District Policy is comprehensive in nature and covers activities of the DISTRICT and of CLUBS where youth are served including the Rotary Youth Exchange Program.

### **Why do we need a Youth Protection Policy?**

Research shows that Youth respond and succeed better when they know they are in a safe environment. We as Rotarians will be more effective in our service to Youth if we provide such an environment. We are people of action leading by example to better serve youth.

### **Isn't the Four-Way-Test sufficient? Why do Rotarians need training?**

Rotarians have an advantage in our commitment to service above self and the application of the Four-Way-Test. However that is not enough. We need to be prepared and have the tools to serve youth to our fullest potential.

### **What is a Certified Volunteer?**

A Certified Volunteer is a Volunteer who has Significant Interaction with youth, has been approved through the completion of a successful background check, has completed the appropriate training, and has been certified by the appropriate Club Youth Protection Officer or District Youth Protection Officer.

### **What constitutes Significant Interaction?**

Significant Interaction includes multiple contacts over time; or the ability to influence the circumstances, location, or the duration of the interaction. Significant Interaction does not include (1) a one-time meeting with Youth in a group setting such as distributing donated dictionaries to a classroom; (2) speaking at a Rotary youth event, where contact with is limited; and (3) participating in a Club or Committee meeting, where youth are also present.

### **Who should become a Certified Volunteer?**

Any Rotarian in a leadership position within the District or a Club with the responsibility to oversee the provision of services to Youth and or is in a position to influence the structure, timing, or location of services. Examples include Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs and Committee members working with Youth.

### **What is a Background Check?**

A Background Check of a volunteer candidate is a check of the criminal record of on an individual as reported by governmental authorities. The purpose is to determine if the volunteer is in any way disqualified from volunteering in a Rotary program.

### **Who Needs a Background Check?**

All Volunteers in District 5580 with Significant Interaction with Youth, members of the District Youth Protection Committee, the District Governor, District Governor-Elect, District Governor Nominee, District Governor Nominee Designate, and the Club Youth Protection officers, Host Club Counselors and Host Club Youth Exchange Officers must become Certified Volunteers.

### **Who is responsible for administering a Background Check?**

District, Clubs, Youth Exchange Program, RYLA, have the responsibility of compliance, disqualifications, and maintaining records.

### **What are approved vendors for a Background Checks?**

Acceptable vendors for background checks in the United States include IntelliCorp, InCheck, and mybackcheck.com. Clubs in Canada use a process which includes provincial law enforcement. Use of other vendor requires the advance written approval of the District Youth Protection Committee.

### **Is a Background Check done through my work or another organization acceptable?**

No. Only a background check done through the District or Rotary Club is acceptable.

### **How often does a Background Check need to be done?**

Background checks are generally good for five years. However in order to facilitate monitoring of background checks in a large District, background checks are required to be done in years ending in 5 or 0. (Example if you had a background check in 2018 you would need to have another in 2020. After that it would be renewed every five years.)

### **Who pays for a Background Check?**

If it is a requirement of the District for a District Program then the District pays. If it is a requirement of the Club for a Club Program then the Club generally pays. Background Checks for the Rotary Youth Exchange Program are paid for by the District.

**What is the cost of a background check?**

For those in the United States, the cost using a third party is between \$12 and \$15. In Canada background checks include the use of the Provincial Police and costs can vary.

**Does the District assist Clubs in obtaining background checks?**

Yes. For the Rotary Youth Exchange Program the District will arrange for the background check. For other needs of the District or individual Club the Youth Exchange Officer is prepared to arrange for the requested background check. The vendor is InCheck ([www.incheck.net](http://www.incheck.net)) and the Club making the request will be billed.

**Can a Club choose to do their own Background Checks?**

Yes for Club Activities. Rotary Youth Exchange must be done through the District using InCheck.

**Who knows the results of a background check?**

Information is shared according to the provisions of the Youth Protection Policy. The District Youth Protection Officer, District Governor, and affected Club Officials

**Who determines if a background check has been successfully completed?**

For District Programs including Youth Exchange and RYLA, the District Youth Protection Officer makes the decision. For checks done at the Club level, the Club Youth Protection Officer. In the case of a negative report, consultation and determinations are done consistent with the District Policy.

**What results of a Background Check would disqualify a Volunteer?**

If a volunteer candidate has been convicted of, has plead guilty to, has deferred adjudication for, or has pled no contest to one of the following the applicant shall be automatically disqualified: (1) Crimes against Children, Persons, or Family; (2) Public indecency; (3) Crimes involving weapons; (4) Felony drug related offenses. In addition a Driving Under the Influence conviction would require special review.

**What is Youth Protection training?**

A training program on the basics of interaction with youth which meets or exceeds the minimum requirements as prescribed by the Youth Protection Policy and has been approved by the applicable Club Policy or District Youth Protection Committee. Training can be online, classroom style or in a group.

### **Who needs to be trained?**

All volunteers in District 5580 with Significant Interaction with Youth, members of the District Youth Protection Committee, the District Governor, District Governor-Elect, District Governor Nominee, District Governor Nominee Designate, and the Club Youth Protection officers, Host Club Counselors and Host Club Youth Exchange Officers must become Certified Volunteers.

### **Do all Club members need to be trained?**

No. However, as people of action leading by example in our society, Rotarians should have a basic understanding of Youth Protection. An understanding of the basic elements will be useful not only at Rotary Projects, but in any environment where youth are present.

### **How do Clubs provide training for members?**

Training is available through the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. On line training is available through the Boy Scouts of America, and traditional classroom type training can be provided by instructors at Club Meetings, LEAD, and at District Conference.

### **When should training be done?**

For those Clubs involved with Rotary Youth Exchange, Host Families, Counselors and others, training will be required before the start of the Program. For Club Activities, those required to be trained under the Policy are to be trained before the start of the Rotary Year. For volunteers training is to be provided when appointed to the committee or before the youth project.

### **Are there differences in the types of training?**

There are variations. Training through the Youth Exchange Program includes additional material on cultural sensitivity. This training is accepted automatically by Central States for Host Families, Counselors and others in the Exchange Program. In addition the District accepts this training in meeting the requirements of the District Policy.

### **What is the “Rule of Three”?**

The “**Rule of Three**” requires when in a non-public setting there to be at least three people present when interacting with Youth. Example: One adult and two youth or two adults and one youth. One-on-one contact between one adult and one youth in a non-public setting is prohibited. A non-public setting would include: a room with door shut, any area where others are unable to observe, in an automobile.

#### Limited Exceptions

- a. Host family members may meet with Rotary Youth Exchange Students one-on-one.
- b. A Certified Volunteer may transport a Youth Exchange Student to or from a Rotary Club meeting and other Rotary Youth Exchange Activities.

### **What are some other best practices associated with serving youth?**

Beyond being familiar with youth protection, terms, and procedures these are additional common sense recommendations. (1) Plan youth events to have at least two adult volunteers, better yet Certified Volunteers, present. (2) Respect privacy. (3) Be sensitive and respectful in your language and responses. (4) Maintain high ethical standards and speak out if uncomfortable.

### **Once I become a Certified Volunteer can I work alone with a Youth?**

Being a certified volunteer DOES NOT allow you to work alone with a Youth. Only under certain circumstances relating to Youth Exchange Students are there limited exemptions.

### **Who can transport Youth?**

Transportation of youth in compliance of the Rule of Three is allowed. Under certain circumstances limited exemptions to the Rule of Three are extended to host families and certified volunteers. There are additional requirements for overnight travel of Youth Exchange Students.

### **What are the responsibilities of the Club President specific to Youth Protection?**

Have working knowledge of the District Youth Protection Policy.

For those Clubs who participate in the Youth Exchange Program, other District Youth Programs, or provide service to Youth, facilitate the Club's adoption of the District Policy through Board Resolution submitted to the District. Or have the Club develop a policy and submit to the District for approval.

Appoint and monitor the work of a Club Youth Protection Officer. (In the absence of a specific appointment the Club President serves.)

### **What are the duties of a CLUB Youth Protection Officer?**

The Club Youth Protection Officer oversees the implementation of the Youth Protection Policy at the Club level. Assure that those who are required to be Certified Volunteers have received the required training and background check. Report any incident to the District Youth Protection Officer or District Governor.

### **Who is the Youth Protection Officer for the District?**

There are two contacts. One for Canada and one for the United States

For Clubs in the United States: Tom Riley (FM AM) [thomas.riley@ndsu.edu](mailto:thomas.riley@ndsu.edu) 701-232-3113

For Clubs in Canada: Peter Holt-Hindle (Lakehead) [pholthin@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:pholthin@lakeheadu.ca) 807-627-1393

For the latest information go to the District Website. Go to Youth, then Youth Protection.

### **What is the result of not implementing a Youth Protection Policy?**

Failure to have a Club Youth Protection Policy, approved by the District, or to adopt by Board Resolution the District Youth Policy will result in the Club not being eligible to participate in the District Youth Exchange Program or other District Sponsored Youth Programs.

### **What do I do if a Youth reports to me an incident of abuse or neglect?**

Should a Youth report an incident of abuse or neglect to a Rotary Volunteer the Volunteer should listen attentively, stay calm, acknowledge the courage to report, assure privacy but not confidentiality, get the facts, be non-judgmental, make a record of your conversation and then immediately report to the District Youth Protection Officer, concurrently report to your Club Youth Protection Officer. In the case of where the child is determined to be in need of protection, in Canada a report is made to the Children's Aid Society. In the United States a report is made either to the Local Police or a Local Child Protection Agency. (Note this is a brief summary of the guidance provided in the District Youth Protection Policy – Appendix D.)

### **What is the result of failing to report an allegation to proper authority?**

Should a Club fail to address an allegation against a Rotary Volunteer for violating applicable law to protect youth at a Rotary related youth program, the Rotary International Board may suspend or terminate the Club.

### **Where are the resources to understand the Youth Protection Policy, best practices, and what I can do in my Club to better serve Youth?**

The District Website (Youth, Youth Protection) has the Policy, A PowerPoint that can be used at a Club Meeting or appropriate Committee Meeting, Youth Protection Policy Handouts, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions.