

Rotary is committed to fostering environments that are safe and positive for young people and free from discrimination and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

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, Rotary members, their partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Report a youth protection concern

Rotary takes all youth protection concerns seriously.

Learn more about our reporting policies or make a report.

Rotary's approach to preventing abuse

The safety and well-being of young people and youth program participants are Rotary's highest priority. Our comprehensive approach to youth protection includes:

- No tolerance for abuse or harassment of young people
- Policies that prevent misconduct and outline how to respond to grooming behaviors and abuse that involve youth and other program participants
- Mandatory youth protection training for governors-elect
- A dedicated and trained staff that uses a trauma-informed approach when receiving and responding to reports of sexual abuse or harassment
- A certification process that requires Rotary districts involved in Rotary Youth Exchange to have:
 - Student, family, and volunteer training in abuse prevention
 - Volunteer screening that includes an application, criminal background check, and reference checks

- A process for reporting allegations of abuse and harassment to Rotary and local law enforcement
- District-specific youth protection policies
- On-site evaluations (audits) that are conducted by Rotary staff members

Youth protection resources for members

Rotary provides comprehensive resources for clubs and districts that participate in youth programs so they can confidently implement our youth protection policies and act to prevent abuse and harassment:

- [Rotary Youth Protection Guide](#)
- [Protecting Youth Program Participants](#) (online course)
- [Electronic and Online Safety Considerations](#)
- [Developing a Crisis Management Plan](#)
- [Rotary Code of Policies, section 2.120.](#)

Working with other youth-serving organizations

If your club or district is interested in working or partnering with a local youth-serving organization, we recommend you:

- Ensure any organization you partner with has youth protection policies in place that meet or exceed Rotary's policies
 - Confirm the partner organization has a process to appropriately screen, vet, and train volunteers
 - Confirm the partner organization's program participants receive youth protection-related training and education
 - Verify that adults do not have significant, unsupervised, one-on-one contact with youth or if they do that there are policies and procedures for ensuring those interactions are appropriate, monitored, and reviewed as appropriate
 - Confirm the partner organization has a process to prohibit individuals from contact with youth who are ineligible or have a documented pattern of inappropriate behavior
 - Periodically review the partner organization's youth protection policies if the partner organization does not regularly complete a self-assessment or audit.

- Create a memorandum of understanding to identify your responsibilities, the partner organization's responsibilities, and any shared responsibilities related to youth protection
- Keep program participants' parents/legal guardians aware of your relationship with other youth-related organizations and where they can go to find more information
- Regularly check-in with both your counterparts at the partner organization and youth program participants about your experiences working together
- Stay apprised of the organization's community reputation and any issues that may arise that could compromise the safety of youth or damage Rotary's reputation as a partner
- Modify, suspend, or end Rotary's relationship with the partner organization if an allegation, suspicion, or report of misconduct occurs
- Ensure Rotary branding is used appropriately, clearly, and in accordance with Rotary's policies
- Confirm the partner organization has adequate liability insurance and require the partner organization to indemnify your club or district and name it as an additional insured.

Related resources

Rotary's programs for young leaders strive to offer diverse and inclusive experiences. Rotary provides resources to help clubs and districts develop programs that promote dignity and respect for all:

- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Rotary Youth Exchange: Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer \(LGBTQ+\) Exchange Students](#)
- [Preventing and Addressing Harassment](#) (online course)

Report a youth protection concern

It's important to understand your responsibility to report any youth protection concerns to Rotary International.

Our incident and allegation reporting policy

Rotary International takes all reports of misconduct seriously, and it is the responsibility of all Rotary members and non-member volunteers to ensure that any serious incidents that involve youth and program participants — including all

allegations of abuse or harassment — are promptly reported to local authorities and to Rotary International. Doing so not only is required but also is a way to prevent further abuse or harm.

How do I report a youth protection concern?

- Ensure that the young person is in a safe environment.
- In case of emergency, contact local law enforcement immediately.
- Report your concern to Rotary International, using the button below, within 72 hours.

Report a youth protection concern

Reporting abuse or a youth protection concern can be difficult. If you need advice or assistance, write to us at youthprotection@rotary.org to talk with Rotary's Youth Safety staff. Our staff members are experienced and trained in receiving reports of abuse or misconduct that involves youth, and each situation will be handled with care and confidentiality.

Frequently asked questions about reporting concerns

How can I report an accident, injury, or other situation that may affect a young person's safety?

You can use the [online reporting form](#) to notify us about an accident, injury, natural disaster, political unrest, or any other situation that may affect a young person's safety or well-being. Rotary staff members work with local club and district leaders to provide support and facilitate communication.

What happens when a youth protection concern is reported?

When Rotary receives a report of a youth protection concern, we will:

- Ensure that any young person who is affected is in a safe environment
- Encourage clubs and districts to offer support or resources for young people who are affected, as well as their families or their peers
- Ensure that youth protection concerns are reported to local law enforcement when necessary

- Guide clubs and districts in conducting internal investigations when they're required and taking any necessary action based on the results
- Prevent any person who is alleged to have violated Rotary's youth protection policies from having contact with young people in a Rotary setting until the matter is resolved
- Ban any person who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise known to have engaged in abuse or harassment of youth from being a club member or participating in activities with youth
- Outline actions that districts must take to maintain their Rotary Youth Exchange certification if an opportunity to improve their youth protection policies or procedures is identified
- Suspend a district's Rotary Youth Exchange certification if necessary
- Advise clubs and districts on how to strengthen their policies or procedures after any report of a youth protection concern, regardless of the outcome.

Who can report a youth protection concern?

Anyone can report a youth protection concern, including youth program participants, parents or guardians, Rotary Youth Exchange host families, or members of the community.

Rotary members are required to report youth protection concerns or any actions that violate our youth protection policies to Rotary International within 72 hours of learning of an incident. Failing to report a youth protection concern can have serious consequences, including the termination of your membership.

Should I report a youth protection concern even if I don't have all of the information or details?

Yes. Even without all of the details, reporting a concern can help protect a young person. Rotary staff members will be able to assist with the next steps to ensure that the matter is addressed appropriately.

Can I report a concern anonymously?

Yes. We want to do everything possible to address youth protection concerns, so if you feel unsure or unsafe, or you simply don't want to disclose your identity, you can submit a report anonymously. However, doing so can make it more difficult for us to fully address the concerns, and we won't be able to contact you if we need more information. Alternatively, you can provide just your contact information. This

allows Rotary staff members to follow up with you while respecting your desire to remain anonymous.

Will my report remain confidential?

Confidentiality would prevent us from addressing the concern you reported, but what we can ensure is privacy. Rotary International will share information only with those who need it in order to address a youth protection concern, according to our policies and applicable local laws.

What if a youth protection concern is about something that happened in the past?

We take all reports seriously and encourage everyone to report youth protection concerns, regardless of when the incidents occurred. We'll work with districts to determine what options for reporting the concern to law enforcement may still be available. Even if there's no immediate safety concern, we still want to do whatever we can to support young people and adults who may have experienced abuse or harassment while participating in a Rotary program or activity.

Reporting something that happened in the past also gives Rotary a chance to identify the causes of abuse or harassment, address barriers to reporting that may still exist, or find any opportunities to improve policies, procedures, educational resources, or their implementation. We are always working to strengthen our efforts to keep young people safe.

What if I don't want the matter reported to legal authorities?

Rotary policy requires that all allegations be reported to local law enforcement in order to protect any youth or program participants who are involved. In some cases, if a person who has been abused or harassed does not want police involved, we may be able to honor that request. This can depend on the circumstances, such as the age of the participant, participation status, or local laws.

Reporting requirements according to the Rotary Code of Policies

All allegations of abuse or harassment shall be reported to RI within 72 hours of learning of the incident. Failure to report incidents to RI within 72 hours may result in suspension of the district's Rotary Youth Exchange certification. Where there is sufficient evidence that an individual, club, or district knowingly failed to report as required, the

general secretary may determine whether and/or the extent to which involved parties may continue to be eligible to participate in Rotary's youth programs, or whether additional sanctions may be necessary, including but not limited to requiring the club to terminate an individual's membership.