

## ROTARY YOUTH PROGRAMS - DISTRICT 6290 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

### 1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 6290 is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact.

### 2. Youth Protection Officer and Committee

The District Governor shall appoint a District Youth Protection Committee composed of Rotary Volunteers (Rotarians and/or non-Rotarians) nominated by the chairs of Youth Exchange, Life Leadership Conference, the Rotary Youth Leadership Awareness Conference, and Interact. The Committee shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Chair of this Committee will be designated the District's Youth Protection Officer.

### 3. Definitions

**Volunteer:** Any adult involved with Rotary Youth activities who has direct interactions with students either alone or unsupervised or in an ongoing relationship. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange Officers and committee members, Strive Volunteers, Interact leaders, Rotarian counselors, Life Leadership Conference and RYLAC staff, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host students for activities or outings or who might routinely drive students to events or functions as part of the Rotary sponsored activity, host parents, and other adult residents of the host home (including siblings and other family members).

**Youth:** Persons involved with Rotary Youth programs, including Rotary Youth Exchange, Strive, Interact, RYLA, and any other youth program sponsored or operated by Rotary District 6290 or any of its Rotary Clubs, regardless of whether they are of the age of majority.

**Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse refers to engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student, or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts, alone or with another person of any age of the same sex or the opposite sex. Additional examples of sexual abuse could include, but are not limited to:

- Non-touching offenses
- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a 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 could 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, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact, such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

**Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse is defined as the use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment. Physical abuse may include but is not limited to such acts of violence as striking (with or without an object), hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, and burning.

**Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse refers to any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.

#### 4. Volunteer Selection

All volunteers interested in participating in the Youth programs sponsored by District 6290 and/or by Clubs in the District must meet the following requirements:

- Complete the Volunteer Affidavit form (or Host Home Application for Youth Exchange Host Families) and authorize the district to conduct a criminal background check (subject to local laws and practices).
- Undergo personal interviews.
- Provide a list of references for the Club or District to check.
- Meet RI and district eligibility requirements for working with students. RI policy prohibits any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment from working with youth in a Rotary context. If an individual is accused of sexual abuse or harassment and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, additional safeguards must be put in place to ensure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact as well as for the protection of the accused. A person 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.
- Understand and comply with RI and district guidelines for the Youth programs. Counselors must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

#### 5. Volunteer Screening

Screening of local club volunteers, including those in the Youth Exchange Program, will be done by local Rotary Clubs following the District's procedures utilizing the Volunteer Affidavit, interviews, reference checks, and background checks through InCheck. Each Club sponsoring or participating in youth programs shall have its own InCheck subaccount under the District 6290 account.

Each Volunteer in District-Run programs, such as the Life Leadership Conference, will be screened by the District Committee sponsoring the youth program at least biannually either by following these procedures or by the Committee obtaining assurances from the local Club that reference checks and background checks have been obtained within the 24-months prior to the end of the District event.

The District Youth Exchange, Interact, Strive, Life Leadership, RYLA, and other youth programs shall annually certify to the District Governor and Youth Protection Officer that all volunteers participating in their programs have had appropriate background checks.

Each Club President, upon taking office, shall certify to the District Governor and Youth Protection Officer that all volunteers participating in the Club's youth programs have had appropriate background checks.

District 6290 will maintain in perpetuity all records of criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors. Electronic records may be forwarded to the District Office for retention.

## **6. Training**

District 6290 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth program participants. District 6290 or Individual clubs will conduct the training sessions. District 6290 will

- Adapt the Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leader's Guide to incorporate specific district guidelines, information on local customs and cultural issues, and legal requirements
- Develop a training calendar that defines the participants, frequency of training required for each volunteer position, and training methods to be used
- Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth program participants: – District governor – District Youth Exchange committee members – Club Youth Exchange committee members – Rotarian counselors – Other Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth activities, such as Strive, Interact, RYLA, and District events
- Establish guidelines to ensure that all participants have received the requisite training
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance
- The district Youth Protection Committee will assist with training of students and adult volunteers in youth programs.