

Rotary District 6540 Youth Services Policy from District By-laws

ARTICLE 11 – YOUTH POLICY

11.1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

Rotary 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.

Given the extent of Rotary activities, any adult (Rotarian and non-Rotarian) who is involved in any Rotary sponsored program (Rotary Youth Programs) must be willing to undergo a criminal background and reference check, without reservation or parameter. This includes any activity associated with any Rotary youth program, collectively or separately, including but not limited to Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Interact, EarlyAct, Speech Contest, Rotary Students, Rotary Scholars, or any Rotary endorsed mentoring program.

Further, anyone involved in such youth activity should expect and Clubs are authorized to do such a background check at least annually. If common knowledge is such that a person has been charged by a law enforcement agency of violating a trusted youth relationship, they shall be removed from any and all activity concerning Rotary youth programs pending the outcome of any related charges.

It is highly suggested that a person within each Rotary Club serve as a "Youth Liaison" and maintain records on ALL individuals engaged in youth connected activities for a period of at least 10 years. This includes persons, including but not limited to committee members, host families, club counselors, drivers, etc. Each person must complete and sign a Youth Volunteer Affidavit and agree to undergo a criminal background and reference check.

It is also suggested that one-on-one contact with an adult/young person be avoided to limit the opportunity for or the accusation of inappropriate behavior. The best circumstance would ensure that all activities and travel involve at least two unrelated adults.

11.2 Compliance with Youth Protection Laws and Reporting

Every Rotarian in every club must be diligent and steadfast in protecting all youth engaged in club and/or district activities. Compliance with all state and federal Youth Protection Laws is required.

Any Rotary Club involved with a child/young person who has made an allegation against a Rotarian or other adult while traveling, visiting or attending a Rotary event must report it to the District Governor immediately upon discovery. In addition, Rotary International provides the following guidelines for addressing such an issue:

- A. An independent and thorough investigation must be made into any claims of sexual abuse or harassment.
- B. Any adult involved in a Rotary youth program against whom an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment is made must be removed from all contact with youth until the matter is resolved.
- C. Any allegation of abuse must be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency, in accordance with RI's zero-tolerance policy.
- D. A club must terminate the membership of and prohibit the involvement of any Rotarian or non-Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of or is otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment of a Rotary youth student. A club may not grant membership to a person who is known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment.
- E. If an investigation into a claim of sexual abuse or harassment is inconclusive, then additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. Such measures should include, at a minimum, the adult being prohibited both by rule and practice, of being alone with any young person interacting on Rotary business.

Regardless of proven criminal or civil guilt on the second accusation, the adult will not be allowed to interact or engage with any youth within a Rotary context. A person who is accused but the charges are absolved 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 or be allowed to have contact with the youth. (November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 72)

11.3 Travel by Youth

It is encouraged and expected that Rotary clubs be involved with various activities involving young people both locally and at the district, state, zone, and international levels. Travel to and from these events must be governed by all youth protection policies and written procedures. Such policies will govern ALL activities including those for the Youth Exchange program.

Rotary Clubs are encouraged to limit travel extended by Rotarians to students to a minimum. If possible, rely on teachers, parents, grandparents, etc. to transport students. Rotarians should be used as a last resort.

If students are transported by Rotarians, the Club is required to have an established process for determining the worthiness of volunteers, including but not limited to, a volunteer application; proof of auto insurance; a criminal and driving record background check, and other reasonable means deemed appropriate by the Club to ensure youth are protected from harm while in their care. If the Rotarian is employed by a public school system, it is assumed that the school's youth program is sufficient and no further action is required.

- A. Written permission slips must be signed by the parents or guardians of all youth participants for all travel extended by a Rotarian or Rotary program. Such permission slip should relay that the Rotarian providing transport is not a professional driver and Rotary retains no liability. Additional information regarding emergency medical care should also be requested. *See attached sample. Copies of the permission slips should be retained by the adult in charge of the student as well as the Club Secretary, per previously stated guidelines in this policy.
- B. Rotarians transporting students must be free of significant past driving infractions or impaired driving charges. Anyone known to have had a DUI (Driving Under the Influence {of drugs or alcohol}), OWI (Operating while intoxicated), reckless driving, or other such charge within the past 5 years shall be PROHIBITED from transporting students or young people. Review of Rotarian driver records should be kept up to date via newsfeeds, common knowledge, and/or formal background checks at least annually.
- C. All parents or legal guardians are to be given complete details regarding the program, location, travel itineraries, sleeping accommodations and contact information of the responsible adults associated with the program BEFORE departure.
- D. If travel is more than 150 miles away from the home club, each young person must obtain travel insurance to include medical coverage, emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, and legal liability, as applicable, in amounts satisfactory to the club or district

organizing the activity or event, with coverage from the time of the minor's departure from his/her residence until their return home.