

D7080 VULNERABLE PERSON PROTECTION POLICY

Rotary International (RI) strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all vulnerable persons (including persons with disabilities, youth, seniors, etc.) who participate in Rotary activities. District 7080 is committed to the highest standard when working with young persons and other vulnerable individuals.

1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Vulnerable Persons

In compliance with requirements by Rotary International, Rotary District 7080 requires that Rotary Members, their spouses, partners, and other Non-Rotary member volunteers at every level of the organization e.g. club, District, zone, etc., use their best efforts to safeguard vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact, and protect them from abuse including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Additionally, if the activity or program involves direct contact and immediate charge for vulnerable individuals, the Rotarian or Non-Rotarian volunteer must have a valid **Vulnerable Sector Check**.

2. Definitions

- i. **Vulnerable Person** - A vulnerable individual shall mean all persons under the age of majority in the province of Ontario (<18), individuals over the age of 65, and persons because of their personal or health circumstances are unable to act independently and require the direct and immediate charge of another individual.
- ii. **Vulnerable Sector Checks** – are a form of police reference check conducted by the Regional Police Department in the municipality where the Searchee resides.
- iii. **Volunteer** - any person involved with Rotary activities & programs who interacts directly with and has immediate charge of vulnerable persons, whether supervised or unsupervised.

3. Vulnerable Sector Check

- i. Programs and activities include and are not limited to Camp Enterprise, RYLA, Youth Exchange, Interact, participation in events with other youth-serving/related organizations and any other events (fundraising included) where Rotarians or non-Rotarian volunteers may have direct contact or immediate charge for a vulnerable individual.
- ii. A valid Vulnerable Sector Check is one that has been completed in the last five (5) calendar years.
- iii. The district **recommends but does not require** that an annual offence declaration form should be completed annually for individuals that meet these criteria during the 5 years while the Vulnerable Sector Check is still valid.
- iv. Vulnerable Sector Check records should be filed with a designated club officer. The privacy of this information and record should be maintained by the club (see District 7080 MOPPP Article X – Confidentiality, Privacy and Security).
- v. Clubs are responsible for implementing and maintaining this program including updating their bylaws to reflect this policy.
- vi. An annual audit will not be completed by the District but the District Governor, District Protection Officer, Youth Services Director and Membership Director reserve the right to request documentation from a club to ensure compliance with this policy.
- vii. District 7080 **does not require** a Vulnerable Sector Check for any Rotary members or Non-Rotary members (new or existing) who **are not or will not be involved** in a Rotary program or activity at any level of the organization e.g. club, District, zone etc. that involves direct contact or responsibility for vulnerable individuals.

- viii. Any costs associated with obtaining a Vulnerable Sector Check are the responsibility of the member or the club.
- ix. Clubs are responsible for monitoring the participation of their members such that they are compliant with the requirement to have (or not to have) a Vulnerable Sector Check completed and on file.
- x. Clubs may implement requirements that are stricter than the one recommended by the District but cannot implement requirements that are less stringent.
- xi. Where requirements, recommendations or guidelines for other Rotary programs exist e.g. Youth Exchange, the District requires that the higher of the standards be followed.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- i. **The District Governor** is responsible for supervision and control of all activities in the District.
- ii. **The District Protection Officer** is responsible for fostering safe operations of Rotary programs, and acts as a resource on abuse, harassment and other protection risks for all youth and vulnerable persons. The District Protection Officer also oversees the proper handling of allegations, harassment, or other crises, and protects the interests of all who are involved.
- iii. **The District Program Committees** are responsible for maintaining program integrity and success by overseeing the administration of the program and ensuring its effective implementation. This includes managing protection protocols, following policies & procedures, participating in & providing necessary training, and ensuring delivery of the program to all participants including volunteers.
- xii. **Club Presidents** have the overall responsibility for operating and coordinating club activities with support from club committee members. Club Presidents and committee members should know all Rotary and district protection policies and program operations that apply to a club's involvement and ensure that club programs meet policy requirements. Clubs are responsible for implementing and maintaining this program including updating their bylaws to reflect this policy.
- iv. **Members** are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and respectful environment in Rotary programs, activities and events. Rotary members, their families, and non-Rotary member volunteers are expected to use their best efforts to safeguard the welfare and prevent the physical or emotional abuse or harassment, or sexual abuse or harassment of every young or vulnerable person with whom they come into contact in connection with any Rotary program, activity or event.

5. Club Compliance

- i. **Vulnerable Persons**
 - a. Club Presidents and committees should:
 - o Appoint a Club Protection Officer.

- Know all Rotary and district youth and vulnerable protection policies and program operations that apply to a club's involvement and ensure that club programs meet policy requirements.
 - Amend the Club Bylaws to reflect this Vulnerable Persons Protection policy.
- b. Volunteer Selection and Screening
- All Rotary Member and Non-Rotary Member volunteers interested in working with vulnerable persons must meet RI and District eligibility requirements. Any person who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment is prohibited from participating in activities with vulnerable persons.
 - If a person is accused of sexual abuse or harassment and the law enforcement investigation is ongoing, inconclusive, or if law enforcement declines to investigate, additional safeguards are necessary to protect any vulnerable person participants with whom the accused may have future contact, as well as the accused. A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated as a program volunteer.
 - Reinstatement is not a right, and reinstatement to his or her former position is not guaranteed. Reinstatement is at the discretion of the District Governor.
- ii. **Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) (ages 15-18)**
- In addition to 5b above, and as it pertains to Rotary Youth Exchange, all participating clubs must (annually and upon request) provide the District Youth Exchange Committee Chair and the District Secretary with a copy of the following:
- A signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with District 7080 and RI youth exchange policies & procedures including but not limited to vulnerable sector checks, youth protection training, committee training, host family selection & training, and student selection process.
- iii. **Interact (ages 12-18)** – Rotary members and other volunteers working with youth in school-based Interact Clubs will likely be required to complete a signed volunteer form provided by the respective school board. They will also need to provide a valid Vulnerable Sector Check. For more details, please contact the D7080 Youth Services Director, the D7080 Interact Chair or the D7080 Protection Officer.
- iv. **All persons under the age of majority in the province of Ontario (<18)** – For more details, please contact the D7080 Protection Officer. NOTE: Further information on Youth Protection can be found in the **Rotary Youth Protection Guide**.

6. Training

District 7080 and member clubs may provide Vulnerable Persons training and information on various protection programs.

- i. District 7080 Youth programs must be familiar with RI Youth Protection resources. RI provides comprehensive resources for clubs and districts that participate in youth programs so they can confidently implement youth protection policies and act to prevent abuse and harassment:

- Rotary Youth Protection Guide - <https://my.rotary.org/document/rotary-youth-protection-guide>
 - Protecting Youth Program Participants (online course) - <https://my.rotary.org/learn?deep-link=https%3A//learn.rotary.org/members/learn/course/internal/view/elearning/2202/protecting-youth-program-participants-2024-25>
 - Electronic and Online Safety Considerations - <https://my.rotary.org/en/document/electronic-and-online-safety-considerations>
 - Developing a Crisis Management Plan - <https://my.rotary.org/document/developing-crisis-management-plan>
 - Rotary Code of Policies, section 2.120. - <https://my.rotary.org/document/rotary-code-policies>
- ii. Conduct specialized training for those involved in Youth programs including:
- District Governor
 - District Youth Chair
 - District Youth Exchange Committee
 - District Interact Committee
 - Clubs participating in Youth Programs
- iii. Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance

7. Allegation Handling and Follow-Through

District takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will handle them in accordance with respective governing requirements and respective RI/District/Committee guidelines.

District, clubs, and members will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with official investigations when conducting its own independent review.

All allegations of abuse or harassment must be immediately reported to the D7080 Protection Officer. The D7080 Protection Officer will evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations, and report them to the District Governor.

All investigations are to be conducted as quickly as possible to protect the respective vulnerable person.

8. Travel by Youth

Youth programs have specific travel policies for youth traveling outside of the local community. (i.e. RYE has a specific travel rule policy). Please contact the D7080 Youth Services Director for more information.