

Rotary Australia Youth Protection Policy Summary

Rotary District strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability 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.

This Australian Youth Protection Policy Summary applies to those Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Rotary Youth Programs. The summary is in accordance with rules and procedures set out in the Rotary International Youth Protection Guide and the expectations of our insurers. It also complies with legislative requirements common to all Australian States and Territories. Additional requirements might be necessary to conform with applicable legislation where the District lies.

These requirements apply to all adult persons working with young people entrusted to their care and must be adhered to.

Glossary

Child	A young person in a Rotary youth program under the age of 18 years.
RI	Rotary International
RYE	Rotary Youth Exchange
RYP	Rotary Youth Program
Volunteer	An adult involved in Rotary Youth Programs who has direct interaction either supervised or unsupervised with young people in a Rotary Youth Program
Responsible Adult	A responsible adult is any adult who, in a family or group situation for a short period of time, is responsible for caring for a youth/students.
Youth Program Participant	Any individual who is participating in a Rotary Youth Program regardless of whether he or she is of legal age of majority, also referred to in this document as young people, children, child, youth, student or young person.
DIO	District Insurance Officer
DYPO	District Youth Protection Officer
WWC	The terminology used for a criminal history check in NSW, Vic, & Qld. Other States and Territories have similar checks under different names

General Requirements

All Rotarians will bear in mind paedophiles often appear as respectable, conscientious, hardworking people.

- For insurance purposes, it is a requirement that all Clubs complete and return the **Club Insurance & Compliance Declaration** to their DIO by **30th April** each year.
- All Rotary clubs will have a **Youth Protection Officer** whose duties involve managing the club's youth protection compliance procedures including insuring the completion of all required protection documentation.
- The suitability of **all volunteers** assisting in RYPs will be carefully assessed in accordance with their roles as set out in the following two points.
- **Volunteers** who could be alone with a young person for a period of time, being such time that might allow grooming or abuse to occur, are required to:
 - complete a Rotary Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration (**Form 3**)
 - attend a comprehensive interview
 - provide three referees
 - have a Working With Children Check (WWC or their state equivalent) Only after an authorised Rotarian has examined or carefully carried out all of the above and found the candidate to be a suitable person will they be allowed to work alone with a young person.

General Requirements continued

- All other volunteers assisting in a RYP may be defined as a “**Responsible Adult**”
A **responsible adult** is any adult who, in a **family or group situation** for a short period of time, is responsible for caring for a youth/students.
The adult shall be in a position to offer the youth/student assistance, guidance or an educational, cultural or recreational experience.
This adult will not have been police checked or formally reference checked because the experience or contact is such that there is virtually no opportunity for misconduct to occur.
The person responsible for the youth/student needs to be satisfied, in the same way a conscientious parent would be satisfied, that this adult **is suitable** for their own underage son or daughter to stay or associate with for a short period of time.
- Wherever possible, it is desirable to have two or more **Responsible Adults** together with a young person at any one time.
- All states require that any Rotarian responsible for storing documents which contain people’s personal information such as medical records, even though they may not have direct contact alone with young people, be assessed in the same way as a **Volunteer** who is alone with a child.
- It is an RI requirement that the Chairs of all Youth Committees, even though they may not have direct contact alone with young people, are assessed in the same way as a **Volunteer** who is alone with a child.
- Where Rotary is assisting in a youth program which is under the control of another organisation such as a school, the protection requirements set out in this document still apply together with any additional requirement the other organisation may require.
- Should a Rotary youth committee officially promote, select, and sponsor students for a program which is run by another organisation, e.g. the National Youth Science Forum, it is their responsibility to ensure the organisation has appropriate screening and safety procedures in place.
- It is mandatory that during the Rotary year the various people involved in RYPs who are required to complete and submit compliance forms as set down in the respective program’s manual(s) do so.
- Declaration forms must be securely stored in accordance with district policy and made available only to people who are required to see them.
- Copies of all declaration forms must be sent to the District for document retention purposes
- This policy and all youth program manuals are to be reviewed annually or more frequently if needed. These updates will be done by the District Review Committee in consultation with the appropriate youth committees. Documents are to be labelled with the date of last revision and their review number.
- Should a Rotarian know or have a strong suspicion that a child has been abused, harassed, mistreated or neglected it is their legal obligation to notify all appropriate authorities.

Requirements Relating to Young People

- Young people on applying to participate in any RYP will be briefed on the requirements, scope and rules relating to that program. They will also be assessed to ensure they are suitable candidates.
- Should they have a problem big or small we must do our utmost to give young people entrusted to Rotary's care whilst participating in a Rotary Youth Program, the confidence to seek our help knowing we will:
 - listen sympathetically
 - respond promptly, effectively and with compassion.
- Young people in RYPs will be briefed on and given a list of responsible people and organisations in and outside Rotary they can approach if they have an abuse or harassment issue.
- We will stress, should they have a problem, they are free to approach whichever person on the list they feel most comfortable talking to.
- A condition of joining or remaining in a RYP is that all participants agree to, and follow the rules and instructions relating to that program.
- At the conclusion of a Youth Program, participants will be given the opportunity to offer comments about the program by way of a debrief. All comments will be seriously considered.

Requirements Relating to Allegations of Abuse

Young people who have been abused might be mentally traumatised and find it very difficult to talk of their experience. If they are to make a full disclosure, it is critical for those they may approach to treat them with care and compassion.

- All adults who Rotary recommends a young person may contact if abused will be briefed and given the RI list of common sense responses to follow should this happen.
- The process following the advice of an allegation shall be:
 - Ensure the safety of the young person
 - Persuade them to go promptly (so forensic evidence if available is not lost) with them to the police
 - Notify the District Protection Officer or the District Governor
 - Email a **Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report** to RI youthprotection@rotary.org. of any incident or allegation within 72 hours
 - Notify insurer via Aon

Do Not-

- contact the accused
 - talk about or tell others
- In all matters where the police are involved, Rotary will allow them to investigate and report.
- Where the police do not wish to investigate, the District Review Committee will conduct a thorough investigation using experts outside Rotary as necessary or as requested by the victim or the victim's legal guardians.
- All Rotarians and those assisting in RYPs are to be aware of behavioural and mood changes among young people. Such changes might be the result of sexual abuse or harassment. If such changes are recognised, investigation of the possible cause should be tactfully undertaken calling upon outside professional assistance if needed.

Requirements Specific to Youth Exchange (YEP)

Youth Exchange Students are to be admired. At an early age they have shown the maturity to leave their family and friends to travel and study in another country where they know nobody. Assimilation to a new culture and in most instances a new language requires our help and understanding.

- RYE is a District program administered for clubs by the District Youth Exchange Committee.
- The District Youth Exchange Committee is required to ensure all parties involved with incoming and outgoing exchanges, attend and receive comprehensive training of inbound and outbound students, inbound and outbound club counsellors, and all natural and host families.
- All Rotary Clubs wishing to be involved in either sponsoring or hosting an exchange student need to apply to the District Youth Exchange Committee for certification to do so by submitting the required forms declaring they will abide by the requirements.
- All RYE students must be given an inbound and outbound counsellor of the same sex to assist and guide them. This is a critical role requiring the appointment of an experienced person.
- The club counsellor must not be a host family member.
- All young people in RYE will be given and briefed on a list of simple, common-sense actions they can take to keep themselves safe.
- It is important the counsellors and the student are in regular communication before and during their time overseas or time hosted in Australia.
- Specific rules have been designed for the YE Program and it is very important these rules are followed by all involved.
- RYE students are obliged to provide regular reports for both their host and sponsoring countries. It is important counsellors ensure this is done.
- All host families will be carefully interviewed in the family home by two members of the Rotary club to ensure their suitability and that of their home before their appointment is confirmed.
- The club youth exchange counsellor will make occasional unannounced or at-short-notice visits to inbound exchange student's homes to check on their wellbeing.
- The District Youth Exchange Committee is required by RI to have a dedicated mobile phone available 24 hours a day for emergency student contact.
- The District Youth Exchange Committee is to ensure all RYE students have travel insurance in accordance with RCOP 46.060.10 before they leave their country of origin.

For More information refer to the following resources:

- Rotary International – Rotary Youth Protection Guide
- RI Online training “Protecting Youth Program Participants”
- Rotary National Insurance Committee
- Aon Risk Solutions
- District Youth Protection Policy and Manuals