



BEST PRACTICES FOR ORGANIZING EVENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

(A Supplement to the RI District 6630 Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual)

RI District 6630 Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth*

District 6630 strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their abilities, Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come in contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

**Rotary District 6630 Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual (Page 12);
Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, October 2019*

Goal: To provide instruction and materials for Club Presidents, Youth Protection Officers (YPO's) and Committee Chairs to assist them in safely planning and organizing Rotary events, actively or passively, involving Children and Youth.

**Youth – Grades 6 – 12, Children – Grades K – 5

Overview: Programming by Rotary Adult Volunteers for children and youth** takes place in a wide range of settings over which you may have varying degrees of control. You may operate in space designed specifically for your activities and services, or you may utilize space that is designed for entirely different purposes. In mentoring and relationship-oriented programs, there is no single identified space for activities.

The suggested best practices contained in this document for organizing youth events are designed for the protection of both our Rotary Children and Youth and the Adult Volunteers with attention to transparency, accountability and safety. The *Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual* will be your primary resource for details. An important rule of thumb is to always include the Club Youth Protection Officer (YPO) in the discussion and planning of these events.

One of the first steps in analyzing the suitability of your programming, and to help determine the level of VOLUNTEER CONTACT – CASUAL OR CONTINUED, is to compile a list of all Club events that involve youth. Not all events will carry the same risk level. For example, RYLA and Interact Clubs will be more complicated to manage than the 4-Way Test Speech Contest.

(For a detailed definition of Volunteer Contact please refer to Section 4, Page 3 of the Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual; a copy of the definition is also contained at the end of this document)

It is essential that ALL Volunteers working with Children and Youth (Rotarian and non-Rotarian) complete the required on-line Youth Protection Awareness training course and background checks through the Youth Volunteer Management System (YVM) administered at the District level as may be required. The level of the vetting process is determined by the extent of the volunteer services.

(Please refer to Pages 3 and 15 of the Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual)

A Volunteer is defined as “Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who interacts directly with youth, whether supervised or unsupervised. This includes service providers/vendors with whom a club may contract to assist in a program.”

(For a complete definition please refer to Section 4, Page 4 of the Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual; a copy of the definition is also contained at the end of this document)

Examples of different types of programming:

Youth Focused:

- 4-Way Test Speech Contest, Interact, Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE), Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Camp (RYLA), Scholarship Interviews, Student of the Month Programs, Mentoring, Holiday or themed parties for children

Adult events with Youth attendees: (with and without Alcohol):

- Rotary Club Meeting, District Conference/District Leadership Assembly, Celebration Banquet, Fundraiser/Auction, Cultural, Music or Sporting Event, Service Project

Getting Started in your Evaluation. Use the District *Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual* for guidance and resources.

- **Evaluate the volunteers.** How many will be needed? Vetting Requirements? Casual Contact or Continued Contact?
- **Program Description** (Sporting, Fundraising, Educational, Training, Other)
- **Number of Participants** (Rotarians, Other Volunteers, Youth, Parents/Guardians, Vendors, General Public)
- **Supervision** (Rotarians, Other Volunteers, Faculty/Staff, Security Service, Certified Rotary Volunteers)
- **Documents** (Waivers, Permission slips, Emergency Medical treatment authorization form, Vendor contracts, Certificates of Insurance, Applications, Releases)
- **Food/Beverage** (Distribution, Safe Handling, Liquor Control)
- **Venue Type** (Indoor/Outdoor, Sporting, Recreational, Entertainment)
- **Venue Safety/** (Fire extinguishers, Ease of access/egress, Shelters, Lighting Security Services, First Aid Kits, Inclement/Severe Weather Procedures)
- **Transportation** (Private, Ride sharing, Public)
- **Emergency Procedure** (Contact list, Communications)
- **Special Circumstances**

STATEMENTS OF BEST PRACTICES

1. Statement about Chaperones and/or Supervising Adult(s) Volunteers

It is extremely important to confirm which chaperone(s) and/or adult(s) have responsibility for “on site” supervision of the minors and are qualified Rotary Adult Volunteers. This information must be communicated in advance with all parties confirming who the “on site” supervising adults are in the event of questions or concerns during the event. It is important that when any changes in responsibilities arise, they are communicated to youth and adults.

2. Statements for Transporting of Youth

In accordance with Ohio Law, transportation of other youth by underage drivers is prohibited. Generally, when you are the Rotary Adult Volunteer, and coordinate transportation, you assume responsibility. **PLAN FOR THE UNEXPECTED.** For example, if you do have to transport a child alone, suggest they call their parent or guardian and leave the line open for the duration of the ride. Make sure enough of the volunteers at your event are qualified Rotary Adult Volunteers vetted for Continued Contact in case their services are needed to assist in transportation. Always use an abundance of caution when making arrangements. Under no circumstances do you leave minors unattended when they are waiting for a ride.

If called upon to provide a ride, it is preferable to have two unrelated adults in each vehicle. At least one of the adults should have cleared the background check for continued contact. If the adult driver is the lone adult, the driver must be a qualified Rotary volunteer or under the supervision of such volunteer. If unexpectedly called upon to provide a ride, it is preferable to have two unrelated adults in the vehicle. Ideally, one of the adults should have cleared the background check for continued contact.

When a Rotarian intentionally drives a student home from the Rotary sponsored meeting or event, the Rotarian should be accompanied by another adult and one of them must be a qualified Rotary Volunteer.

Under no circumstances shall any volunteer plan to be alone in a car with an individual student unless unexpectedly called upon and no other option is available. The driver must take the student directly home and deliver the student to the door of the home, assuring he or she enters the home.

Participant permission forms should include authorization for youth to be transported by personal vehicles and/or rental vehicles and should include a list of authorized drivers.

Picking up a child may require a photo I.D. Clubs should seek the advice of lawyers from within their membership, or from outside legal counsel, to create a permission slip which includes a **WAIVER** for Parental/Legal Guardian Consent for Rotary Adult Volunteers to transport youth.

(Please refer to Travel in Exhibit A and Exhibit B, Pages 13-14 in the Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual)

3. Statement/Policy prohibiting Use of Drugs or Alcohol or Possession of Weapons by Children or Youth

The use of illicit drugs, including prescription drugs not prescribed to the youth, is prohibited. The unauthorized use, distribution or possession of drugs or alcohol during participation in an event will result in immediate contact with parent and/or legal guardian and expulsion from the event, etc. The possession or use of weapons including (but not limited to) knives, chemical sprays, chains, or sticks is prohibited and is grounds for immediate expulsion. The possession or use of firearms may be prohibited by the individual venue being utilized for the particular event.

4. Statement about Health Events

No adult, including qualified Rotary Adult Volunteers, may administer or permit the administration of a medication, prescription or non-prescription, without the expressed written permission of the parent or legal guardian of the minor. PLAN FOR UNEXPECTED HEALTH EVENTS SUCH AS ASTHMA ATTACKS, ALLERGIC REACTIONS, DIABETIC SHOCK, EPILEPTIC SEIZURES AND TRAUMA. Health statements may be needed which include a list of possible health emergencies and permission to administer necessary medication by the parent or legal guardian. It is recommended to work with either club or outside legal counsel to develop a medical authorization form, to be signed by a parent or legal guardian, pertinent to your individual event.

5. Statement about Attendance by Youth when there is the Serving of Alcohol

Any event serving liquor that has minors in attendance as guests or volunteers, must exercise extra care, making sure minors do not have access to alcohol. Interact student volunteers must be in compliance with their school's code of conduct which possibly prohibits students from volunteering at an event serving alcohol.

Extra precautions can include using wristbands to identify youth Volunteers or restricting their presence to certain areas of the venue. For example, have them work in a coat check room or in the lobby. If they're seated at tables as guests, assign a Rotarian to supervise the table.

This will not only restrict youth access to alcohol but may prevent other guests from offensive behavior such as inappropriate language, or jokes.

If a liquor license is required by the State of Ohio you must have the liquor license in place or liquor liability coverage offered by RI will not respond. Make sure your Club follows the local laws.

If the Rotary event contracts with the venue to serve liquor, review the contract making sure there aren't any "hold harmless" clauses agreeing to indemnify the facility for incidents involving the serving of liquor. Require the venue to provide you with a certificate of insurance outlining their coverage. You may wish to consult club or outside legal counsel regarding the review of this document.

6. Statement regarding Conducting Interviews in and out of school settings

Rotary Adults volunteering with children and youth shall observe the "two adult rule" at all times so that no adult is left alone with children or youth on a routine basis. It is never appropriate for an adult to be alone with an individual child at any age. In unavoidable circumstances where only one adult is present, the door must be open or the meeting must be in a well-trafficked public space. At least one Volunteer conducting interviews must be a qualified Rotary Adult Volunteer and vetted for Continued Rotary Contact. *All meetings, gatherings, and events will adhere to a two, unrelated adult minimum rule.*

7. Statement regarding group sleeping arrangements

Two unrelated adults must be present with any number of students during the stated "lights out" time. In dorm or hotel settings, students and adults should sleep in separate rooms (connecting rooms are acceptable). Room checks will be performed at stated lights out time.

There should be separate sleeping areas for males and females. Any leader who is a minor must be under direct adult supervision at all times. When college-aged counselors are used, an adult 23 years or older must be the second adult where there are high school youth present. All Volunteers must be qualified Rotary Adult Volunteers and vetted for Continued Rotary Contact.

8. Statement on Individual Meetings

Some programs such as tutoring, mentoring, reading programs or scholarship interviews may be held outside of a school setting.

These opportunities may necessitate the Rotary Adult Volunteer meeting individually with the student. The Rotary Adult Volunteer must obtain prior written consent from the parent or legal guardian. Rotary Adult Volunteers vetted for Casual Contact are not eligible to conduct one-on-one meetings, only those vetted for Continued Contact.

All meetings must occur in a well-trafficked public space such as libraries, restaurants or coffee shops. Youth and Volunteer will meet at the public space and depart from the public space separately. Rotary Interact Advisers that are also school faculty members, are exempted from this rule.

As a rule, Rotary Adult Volunteers shall not be alone with an individual student. If an unavoidable situation occurs (e.g. a student is the first to arrive or last to be picked up), the adult shall wait with the student in a well-trafficked, public space.

9. Statement of allegation made as to occurrence

There are very specific steps that **MUST** be taken immediately after alleged abuse, or harassment or neglect is reported. Some of them may be performed by the Club YPO and initially investigated, while others should be performed by a district officer, as specified.

(Those steps are found in 11., 11.A, 11.B 1-9, Pages 8-10 of the Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual.)

Additional references for inclusion that are contained in the Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Manual (YPP)

Definition of a Volunteer*

- *Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who interacts directly with youth, whether supervised or unsupervised. This includes service providers/vendors with whom a club may contract to assist in a program.*

For Rotary's youth programs, volunteers include:

- *Club and district Youth Exchange officers and committee members*
- *Program counselors or advisers*
- *Members and nonmembers and their spouses and partners who have contact with participants during activities or outings or who transport participants to events*
- *Rotary Youth Exchange host parents and other adult residents of host homes, including host siblings and other family members*
- *Youth programs alumni who assist in the administration of a youth program*

(Please refer to Section 4, Page 4 YPP Manual)

Rotary Volunteer contact with Youth*

Casual Contact Characteristics *(incidental and infrequent group contact)*

- *Volunteers not directly responsible for the youth but may provide incidental transportation or invite a youth to an event such as dinner, movie, sports event or weekend activity. Section 4, page 3 YPP manual*
- *Casual contact is infrequent and incidental so that a regular pattern is not developed.*
- *Casual contact takes place in a group setting with no reasonably foreseeable risk of abuse or harassment.*

(Please refer to Section 4, Page 3 YPP Manual)

Continued Contact Characteristics* *(significant and unsupervised one-to-one contact) - Volunteers supporting Rotary functions such as Youth Exchange Officers, Counselors*

- *Host Families, assigned to transport students to/from Rotary meetings and events on a continuing basis*
- *Volunteers with custody of youth for 72 hours or more, such as RYLA.*

(Please refer to Section 4, Page 3 YPP Manual)

Travel by Youth*

For the travel of Inbound RYE students outside District 6630, permission must be obtained from the District RYE Chair by the rules specified on the District Website for RYE. Travel within the District is governed by the local club (YEOs and Counselors) and the Host Families, provided the policies are approved by the District RYE Chair.

For all other youth travel sponsored by District 6630 or its clubs, the following will be done before departure:

- a) Obtain written permission from parents*
- b) Give parents details of travel*
- c) When traveling more than 150 miles from the residence, verify program participants have adequate insurance*
- d) All adults who drive or supervise youth on overnight travel or overnight Rotary events, must be screened and qualified volunteers unless the trip is part of a school program chaperoned by full-time teachers of a state accredited school*

(Please refer to Section 13, Page 10 YPP Manual and Exhibits A and B, Pages 13-14, Travel)

Complaints of abuse or harassment to the District*

Complaints will be handled fairly and quickly at the club level and sent to the District Governor as soon as possible, but in no case more than 72 hours after the incident. The District Governor will forthwith establish an investigating committee, composed of no less than five committee members, who are diverse in gender and who take an oath of impartiality.

The District YPO shall be one of the members and shall be chairperson of the committee. The District YPO shall be a voting member.

(Please refer to Section 11. B (3), Page 10 YPP Manual)

Incorporation and Liability Insurance*

RI provides District 6630 liability insurance with appropriate coverage and policy limits. This policy protects the organization from third-party claims and lawsuits alleging negligence by the organization, its employees, or its volunteers.

(Please refer to Section 5, Page 5 YPP Manual)

Note: the Rotary Clubs Insurance Program can be accessed by logging on to:

<https://rotary.hylant.com> Username: rotary@hylant.com Password: Rotary1905