



# INTERACT

Guide for Rotary Club Sponsors  
and Advisers

## WHAT IS INTERACT?

Interact is a service club for youth ages 12 to 18 who want to connect with other young people and have fun while serving their communities and learning about the world. Clubs, which meet at least twice a month, are sponsored by local Rotary clubs. Interact clubs organize two projects every year, one that helps their school or community and one that promotes international understanding. Members of sponsor Rotary clubs mentor Interactors as they carry out the projects and develop leadership skills.

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# STARTING AN INTERACT CLUB

## 1 Take action in your Rotary club

A successful Interact club starts with a committed sponsor Rotary club. Rotary members support Interact as sponsors, guides, and mentors, working alongside Interactors to serve local schools and communities. Rotary members keep the connection between Interact and Rotary strong by reporting the names of club leaders in the Rotary database, connecting Interact clubs with new opportunities, and providing a safe environment for all participants.

Make Interact the topic at your next Rotary club meeting. Team up with other members who want to support young leaders in your community. Discuss what kind of Interact club your community needs. As a sponsor club, you have the freedom to innovate and engage diverse communities within your district. You have two key choices to make when you start your club: the age range and the club base.

### AGE RANGE

The age range for Interact membership is 12 through 18. However, you can choose to focus on any subset between 12 and 18, based on your community needs, your club's interest, and its capacity to support the chosen age group.

### CLUB BASE

Each Interact club is either school-based or community-based. A school-based club draws its members from one school, while a community-based club draws from multiple schools.

If your Interact club is based in a school, be sure to invite members from all grades. You'll need to gain approval from school authorities and assign a faculty adviser to the club. (Learn more about faculty advisers on page 5.)

If you choose to sponsor a community-based club, work with community partners to reach out to young people and to decide on a meeting location. Invite young people in your area, including those with disabilities, members of indigenous and immigrant communities, and those without access to leadership development support.

Interact clubs can meet in person, online, or a combination of both — making Interact a flexible option for rural communities and home-schooled students. Online meetings also offer a great opportunity to keep members engaged during school breaks.

**Do you want to partner with other clubs in your district as co-sponsors? Interact clubs may be co-sponsored by up to three Rotary clubs. When clubs co-sponsor, you share the responsibilities of supporting and mentoring Interactors and strengthening local Rotary connections.**

## 2 Recruit members

Once you've determined the kind of club you'll sponsor, reach out to prospective members. Young people who are familiar with Rotary, such as family members of Rotarians, can be enthusiastic Interactors. Use your network to promote the club to service-minded young leaders. Be sure to seek out Rotary Youth Exchange and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) participants and alumni.

If you're sponsoring a school-based club, ask school officials how to recruit students. For a community-based club, choose a meeting location where young people already gather to study, play sports, or connect with their peers. Hang up posters in community and youth centers, collaborate with community partners, and promote Interact through social media. Set up a meeting to connect potential members, answer their questions, and confirm their commitment to develop an Interact club. You can also determine when and where the new club will meet.

### 3 Elect officers

Each Interact club has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Clubs can establish additional officer positions with the approval of sponsor club(s). Check the **Standard Interact Club Constitution and Bylaws** for guidance on officer elections.

In order to strengthen the connection between Rotary and Interact, Interact club presidents are encouraged to identify themselves to Rotary using the **Interact Club Contact Information form**. That way, they can receive the latest Interact resources and opportunities directly from Rotary. Although this is not a requirement and is completely at the Interact president's discretion, it's important, in order to comply with youth protection and data policies, that Interactors choose to report themselves rather than have their information shared by someone else.

### 4 Make it official

Now that you've gathered a group of young leaders eager to begin their Interact service, here's how to officially charter your club with Rotary:

Complete the **Interact Club Certification Form**, adopt the standard constitution and bylaws, and obtain the required signatures from your club and district leaders.

Scan your completed form and email it to **interact@rotary.org**. You can also fax or mail a copy of the original form to the appropriate **Rotary International office**. Note that there is no fee to charter an Interact club.

Once Rotary receives your paperwork, it will take four to six weeks to charter the club and prepare the certificate. Rotary will email it to the sponsor Rotary club president(s) to sign and present to the new Interact club.

You don't have to wait for your official certificate to arrive in order to start club activities! Even before you receive it, members of the new Interact club — under the guidance of your club's members — can meet, organize, and take action in the community.

### 5 Celebrate!

Once the certificate arrives, plan an event to celebrate the launch of your new Interact club. In addition to recognizing the partnership between the Interact club and your Rotary club and any co-sponsors, this event also strengthens the connection between Interactors and your Rotary district. Invite Interactors, family members, school administrators and teachers, community partners, Rotarians, and district leaders.

There's no standard ceremony to charter an Interact club, induct members, or recognize officers, so be innovative! Blend your Rotary traditions with the energy of these Interactors to create something new.

### 6 Keep your Rotary connection strong

Now that their club is official, your Interactors will grow more independent. They'll develop confidence as they plan their own meetings and organize their own projects. But your Rotary club's support is still important. Hold joint meetings for planning, assign Rotary members as mentors, and identify an enthusiastic adviser — a Rotarian, faculty member, or community leader — who can effectively connect Rotary and Interact. (Learn more about advisers on page 5.)



# RISK MANAGEMENT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

When Rotary clubs work with youth, they make an investment in the future of their communities and in Rotary itself — but this investment can succeed only if all activities are administered responsibly. Interact clubs don't exist in a vacuum; they operate in a world that can be dangerous. Risk management involves understanding potential risks associated with youth activities — such as injury, illness, and abuse — so they can be prevented or mitigated. Your club should consider the following points when developing safe procedures for working with Interactors, and youth in general:

- Follow Rotary's youth protection policies as outlined in the **Rotary Code of Policies**.
- Ensure adult supervision for meetings, activities, and service projects.
- Screen all adults who have significant unsupervised contact with Interactors. This includes Rotarian and faculty advisers, mentors, and chaperones.
- Follow local guidelines for youth participation in online activities, such as e-meetings and the use of social media.
- Follow Rotary's **youth travel policies** for travel outside the local community.

Develop and implement a club youth protection policy that addresses physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and harassment. Ensure that any reports of abuse or harassment are communicated immediately to district leaders and/or local law enforcement. Contact your district youth protection officer, Rotary Youth Exchange chair, or district governor for additional policy details and requirements.

Establish a code of conduct for adult and youth participants. These rules should reflect local laws, cultural standards, and any applicable policies of the district or club, as well as best practices for youth protection.

Stay in regular communication with district leaders to coordinate fast action during potentially dangerous

situations, including those that involve travel, the use of power tools, the transport of heavy materials, and participation in outdoor service projects.

Interact project and activity planning should include a risk management plan that evaluates potential risks and provides a solution for each. As a sponsor club, consider these questions as you develop your risk management plan:

- What happens if someone is injured?
- What happens if a participant reports inappropriate or dangerous behavior?
- What happens if a natural disaster strikes during the program or event?

Work to minimize potential risks in these ways:

- Implement volunteer screening and training programs as required by your district policies and in line with best practices.
- Teach participants about safe behavior during the program.
- Develop and practice your disaster emergency plan.
- Purchase adequate liability insurance coverage for your region.

## STATEMENT OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

Rotary International 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.

If you have any questions about this policy, email [interact@rotary.org](mailto:interact@rotary.org).



# SUPPORTING YOUR INTERACT CLUB

Interact members are legal minors, and Interact may be their first service club experience. That's why Rotarians attend their meetings and oversee the financial records of Interact clubs. Although Interact clubs are largely self-sustaining and require little or no financial support from your club, they do need guidance in managing their funds.

When Rotarians play an active role in the Interact clubs they sponsor, they help Interactors develop leadership skills, build connections in the community, and become part of Rotary's family.

Although Interact activities may vary depending on local custom, the support that Rotarians offer is universal. Here are some ways you can mentor and support Interactors:

## **COLLABORATE**

Volunteer at youth-led service projects and invite Interactors to join you for your own club events.

## **GUIDE**

Share successes and lessons learned from Rotary service projects. Help Interact clubs align their service with Rotary's areas of focus.

## **PROMOTE SERVICE**

Showcase Interact club projects in your club newsletter and on your district website.

## **LEARN TOGETHER**

Invite Interactors to your district conferences and attend district Interact training events.

## **INNOVATE**

Exchange ideas about how to create a vibrant club that engages members and attracts new ones.

## **CELEBRATE SUCCESSES**

Develop programs that recognize Interactors' leadership skills. Encourage clubs to apply for the Presidential Citation for Interact Clubs, and inspire them to take part in the annual Interact Video Awards. Together, plan service projects and events to commemorate World Interact Week each November.

## **STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS**

Introduce Interactors to Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) and Rotaract. Invite Interact officers to RYLA events to build their skills in leadership, communication, and teamwork. Promote Rotary Youth Exchange to Interactors. Connect university-bound Interact members to Rotaract clubs.



# INTERACT ADVISERS: YOUR INTERACT CHAMPIONS

Interact advisers are adults who serve as advocates for young leaders in schools and communities. They support the day-to-day operations of Interact clubs, function as the primary club liaisons to Rotary International, and ensure that everyone who works with the clubs follows Rotary policies to safeguard youth.

In order to guide Interactors in service and develop young leaders' skills, each Interact club must have at least one adviser. Advisers can be Rotarians in the sponsor Rotary club, teachers, parents, or community volunteers; Rotaract members also make excellent Interact advisers. Although only one adviser is required, clubs benefit from having multiple advisers to mentor and support them.

In addition to Rotary-related advisers, school-based Interact clubs must have a faculty adviser who ensures that club members meet the school's extracurricular and academic requirements.

## **Interact advisers' responsibilities include:**

### **MENTOR AND MOTIVATE**

- Offer advice during project planning.
- Inspire members during challenging times.
- If conflicts occur, encourage Interactors to find constructive ways to resolve them.
- Oversee officer elections and provide guidance to make sure they are fair.
- Support innovative project ideas.

### **FACILITATE AND PROTECT**

- Attend meetings and ensure that all members feel safe and respected.
- Supervise Interact activities and projects.
- Handle equipment needs and logistics at project sites.
- Help create a calendar of Interact events.
- Secure parental consent for all club social media activities.
- Make sure Rotary policies are followed whenever young people travel, work with adults, and use social media.

### **CONNECT AND COACH**

- Exchange stories, ideas, and strategies with the district Interact chair.
- Help maintain accurate club records and oversee club funds.
- Ensure that the club provides contact information to Rotary every year.
- Promote Interact to Rotarians, school leaders, and community members.
- Coordinate leadership training for Interact officers by connecting them with RYLA, district leadership events, and local training opportunities.

**By 1 July every year, be sure that Rotary receives the most current information about your Interact adviser or advisers. Even if an adviser serves for multiple years, you must submit the **Interact Club Contact Information form** annually.**



# ROTARY DISTRICT SUPPORT

Sponsor Rotary clubs play the primary role in guiding and mentoring Interact clubs, but Rotary districts also support Interact. Rotary offers several district-level roles, committees, and training events to promote and strengthen Interact. In addition, districts should look for opportunities to include Interactors in their events, service projects, and training sessions.

## + District Committees

District governors are encouraged to appoint the following committees to promote and strengthen Interact and Rotary's other programs for young leaders.

### **DISTRICT INTERACT COMMITTEE**

Members may include both Rotarians and Interactors; the district Interact chair leads the committee. This committee promotes Interact, encourages new clubs, and provides local support for clubs.

### **DISTRICT YOUTH SERVICE COMMITTEE**

This committee supports young leaders' transition through Rotary's programs and offers them progressively greater leadership opportunities as they develop their skills. It also strengthens connections between the programs and encourages participants to take part in alumni activities.

## + District Roles

Through the following roles, each district has the opportunity to support Interact. Rotarians serve in all the roles except that of district Interact representative, which is filled by an Interact member.

### **DISTRICT GOVERNOR**

The district governor supports all programs and activities in the district. The governor approves new Interact clubs and co-sponsorship of Interact clubs and appoints the district Interact chair and other leaders.

### **DISTRICT INTERACT CHAIR**

The district Interact chair administers the Interact program and ensures that all clubs submit contact information to Rotary International every year. The Interact chair finds innovative ways to connect Interact clubs with one another and to strengthen the link between Interact and Rotary.

### **DISTRICT INTERACT REPRESENTATIVE**

If there are more than two Interact clubs in your district, Interactors can elect a district Interact representative — an Interact member who encourages Interact clubs and fosters a deeper commitment to international understanding.

### **DISTRICT YOUTH SERVICE CHAIR**

The district youth service chair identifies opportunities for Interactors to get involved with Rotary at the district level and facilitates connections between Rotary's programs for young leaders, alumni engagement activities, and membership outreach.

### **DISTRICT YOUTH EXCHANGE CHAIR**

In addition to administering Rotary's Youth Exchange program, the district Youth Exchange chair can serve as a valuable resource regarding youth protection and risk management.

### **DISTRICT YOUTH PROTECTION OFFICER**

The district youth protection officer can advise on Rotary's youth protection policies and procedures.

### **DISTRICT ALUMNI CHAIR**

The district alumni chair facilitates the transition from Interact to Rotaract and connects alumni with other Rotary opportunities.

Are you a district Interact chair? Ask your district governor to confirm that you've been reported to Rotary so that you'll receive emails about Interact news and opportunities.



## District Events

When Interactors and Rotarians learn and serve side by side, they build lasting Rotary connections. Work with your district leaders to bring Interactors and Rotarians together at training events and conferences, where they can exchange ideas with other service-minded leaders in your region.

### DISTRICT INTERACT TRAINING

One of the district Interact committee's most important responsibilities is to provide training for Interact club officers, Interact club committee chairs, Rotarian advisers, and faculty advisers. The training should be scheduled at least one month before the leaders take office so they have time to familiarize themselves with their new roles and have questions answered.

### DISTRICT INTERACT CONFERENCES

These annual events allow Interactors to share project planning ideas and learn how Interact works in your area. They are an excellent way to inspire community service and provide leadership development opportunities.

### MULTIDISTRICT MEETINGS

Joining together across districts gives Interactors an even greater opportunity to learn from one another, work cooperatively on projects, and see the global community of Interact in action.



## INTERACT'S GLOBAL COMMUNITY

One of the best things about Interact is that it connects young leaders with Rotary's global community, enabling them to build relationships, learn about other cultures, and exchange ideas with peers worldwide. As a member of a sponsor club, you expand your own network, foster international understanding, and deepen relationships with other Rotarians who actively support young people's development as leaders.

Here are some ways to help your Interactors connect with other clubs, both locally and globally:

- Start with your district. Sign in to **My Rotary** to access a list of Interact clubs in your district and then reach out to sponsor clubs and advisers. Introduce the clubs to one another, plan a district service project, and invite the members to district leadership training.
- Would you like to connect with an Interact club in a particular region? Check the Official Directory; any Rotary club with an (I) after its name sponsors at least one Interact club. Get in touch with the sponsor club's president to set up an online exchange or a twin club relationship.
- Discover the world of Interact through social media. Like Rotary's **Interact Facebook page** to see, in real time, what's on the minds of Interactors worldwide and how they take action to improve their communities. Reach out to other Interact clubs and districts to develop friendships, brainstorm project ideas, and share project photos.
- Explore Rotary's social network on Rotary.org, where you can create your own profile to connect with other members who share your Interact commitment. Exchange ideas in Rotarian-led discussion groups, and find partners to connect Interactors worldwide.
- Take advantage of the power of the Internet. A few minutes of research will lead you to club and district websites worldwide, where you can find contact information for other Rotarians who support Interact.



## BEYOND INTERACT: ROTARY'S PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG LEADERS

Interact is just one of the ways that Rotary invests in young leaders. Learn more on [Rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org), and contact your district leaders to find out how you can get involved. Tell Interactors about these other programs so they can experience the full range of Rotary's opportunities for young leaders.

### **ROTARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS (RYLA)**

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, better known as RYLA, is a leadership experience developed by clubs and districts. Each RYLA has a particular focus — building confidence, developing skills, providing professional development, or encouraging personal growth — and all of them give young people an opportunity to develop leadership skills and make new friends.

### **ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE**

Rotary Youth Exchange activates the global community of Rotary — districts, clubs, host families, and schools — to give students the chance to discover a new culture, learn a new language, and become ambassadors for peace in more than 70 countries.

### **ROTARACT**

Rotaract is the perfect next step after Interact. Rotaract clubs, open to those ages 18 to 30, carry out local and international projects while developing leadership skills.

### **NEW GENERATIONS SERVICE EXCHANGE**

New Generations Service Exchange is a customized and intensive international exchange experience with a humanitarian or vocational focus for adults up to age 30.



# ROTARY RESOURCES

## + Online Tools

- **Brand Center** — Customize and download your Interact club logo for use on promotional materials, club shirts, and more.
- **Rotary Showcase** — Be inspired by completed service projects, and post yours for everyone to see.
- **Rotary Ideas** — Find service ideas or seek contributions, volunteers, materials, or partners for your projects.
- **Discussion groups** — Share your experiences and ideas with members around the world.
- **Interact Facebook page** — Connect with Interactors and the Rotarians who support them.

## + Events and Awards

- **World Interact Week** — Celebrate Interact's global impact during the week surrounding the founding of the first Interact club on 5 November.
- **Interact Video Awards** — Share your Interact story for a chance to win this global award.
- **Presidential Citation for Interact Clubs** — Recognize Interact clubs that meet the Rotary president's challenges to make a positive difference.

## + Communications and Publications

- **Young Leaders in Action** — Monthly e-newsletter covering Rotary's programs for young leaders, including Interact
- **Visual Identity Guidelines: Rotary's Programs for Young Leaders** — Provides inspiration and best practices related to logos, color palettes, typography, and more
- **Interact Statement of Policy**
- **Standard Interact Club Constitution and Bylaws**
- **Interact Club Certification Form**
- **Rotary's Areas of Focus** — Introduction to the six areas of focus, with examples of service projects for each
- **Community Assessment Tools** — Guide for identifying effective service projects within the community
- **Rotary Code of Policies** — Policies and procedures established by the RI Board of Directors in support of the RI Constitution and Bylaws

Visit [Rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org) for more resources for sponsoring, co-sponsoring, and supporting an Interact club. Questions? Email [interact@rotary.org](mailto:interact@rotary.org).

This is the 2016 edition of the Interact Guide for Rotary Club Sponsors and Advisers, formerly known as the Interact Handbook. The information contained in it is based on the Constitution and Bylaws of Rotary International and the Rotary Code of Policies. Please refer to those documents for exact Rotary policy. Changes to the documents listed above by the Rotary International Board of Directors override policy as stated in this guide.

This guide is produced by the Programs for Young Leaders department of Rotary International. Email questions or comments to [interact@rotary.org](mailto:interact@rotary.org).



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