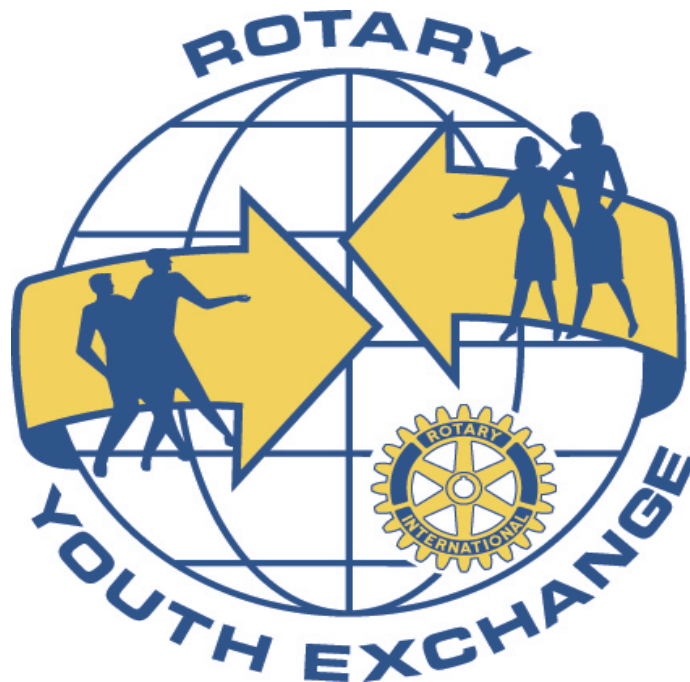


SUMMARY SECTION



ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE AUSTRALIA

Extracted from - A Guide To

Club and District

Certification

February 2006

**This guide was compiled by a subcommittee appointed by the
Australian Rotary Youth Exchange Programme Chairs' Conference**

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Our Aim

The committee's aim in writing this manual was firstly to produce documents which would simplify and standardise the procedures already being used, some intuitively, by both Districts and Clubs to safely care for exchange students. DI 1 is a comprehensive, all-embracing policy; CL 1 covers all Club tasks. The remainder comprises instructions to guide those involved through specific tasks and check lists to confirm these tasks have been completed.

Our second and very important aim was to write everything in a way that would comply with Rotary International's new minimum requirements for District and Club mandatory certification but based on Australian laws and customs. Fortunately we have achieved this. Rotary International has said we have done an excellent job and they have fully endorsed the total content of our manual.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all who have taken the time to send suggestions and comments. All have been considered. I would also like to express my thanks to my hard working committee who made the manual possible. At the risk of omitting someone I feel I must thank the following - Freda not only for her wise counsel in matters pertaining to student safety but for her invaluable assistance with the wording, Paul for procedural and legal help, Euan, Peter and Frank for their untiring efforts to get things right, David for writing the background paper and particularly Joe for his unfailing encouragement and advice. It would be remiss of me if I did not also thank my wife Pam for her untiring efforts in typing, retyping, correcting and adjusting my many drafts of each document. Thank you everyone. I trust our efforts will prove to be of assistance in enabling the great Youth Exchange Program to strengthen and march forward.

David Binks (Subcommittee Chair) February 2006

Introduction

Where Rotary Youth Exchange in Australia stood as of February 2006 and how this position was reached

In December 2005 Rotary received a great compliment, something Rotarians who were involved with Youth Exchange can be justifiably proud. Emeritus Professor Freda Briggs, an international authority on the protection of children and young people and previously a critic of Rotary's handling of exchange students, recently announced

"Rotary International is leading the world in the protection procedures they are putting in place to safeguard their exchange students"

What is more Professor Briggs said

"Much of the push for this world wide initiative of Rotary came from Australia."

Professor Briggs was referring to stringent minimum procedures that Rotary International placed on all Rotary Districts and Clubs that were involved in Youth Exchange. Procedures put in place have enabled all clubs and districts who wish to participate in the Youth Exchange program to receive recognition for the high standard of duty of care they have adopted by way of mandating official certification. For Australians involved in Youth Exchange this was great news. It meant all districts and clubs participating in Youth Exchange around the world now had to comply with the high standards in place at the time in Australia or leave the program. It was a great relief for those Rotarians placing students overseas to know that their students were briefed, looked after and cared for in the same manner as Australia briefed, looked after and cared for our inbound students.

Joe Cohen-Cramp, the elected spokesman at this time for all Youth Exchange District Chairmen in Australia said

Rotary International's initiative is a giant step forward in the world for Rotary Youth Exchange. Australia is extremely fortunate in that the group of Rotarians involved in Youth Exchange in this country have virtually all been kind and caring people whose only motivation is to help and look after our students ensuring they gain the maximum benefit from their exchange. We have always put student welfare first.

Joe went on to say

"I doubt there is one club involved in Youth Exchange in Australia who can not quite easily comply with the new regulations. The new regulations will recognise and formalise what our clubs are already doing. Such is the caring nature of Rotarians involved in the programme that many are instinctively doing many of the tasks the new regulations require. The new regulations will now confirm to these hard working Rotarians what a fine job they have been doing."

Any Australian parents sending their child overseas would naturally and rightly want to know that the families who are to host them have been vetted and briefed and the student's accommodation checked. Conversely of course we must do the same here for all students coming to this country. The instructions and checklists which will be given to certified clubs involved in student exchange will make it easier for clubs, particularly clubs who have not been regularly involved in exchange to participate. Another advantage of the new system is that a club, after completing the checklist and signing off, will be infinitely better protected in a court of law if something goes wrong and the club is sued. Regrettably as things stand now a club currently could be involved in a complex legal battle to try to prove their innocence.

The greatest advantage, however, of this new RI initiative is the knowledge that not only have we not forgotten something but that all of the many students our country places overseas will now be in the care of overseas districts and clubs who are now following similar “duty of care” procedures to those we will now be following in Australia”

This manual contains procedures for Districts and Clubs to follow and the necessary forms for clubs to receive official certification. Note all clubs involved in student exchange since 30th June 2006 were required by RI to be certified.

The process which led to the certification requirement started back in November 2002 when the Board of Rotary International at its meeting in Bangkok agreed to the following Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth:

“Rotary International is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians’ partners, and any volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact through Rotary.”

In the light of that Statement, the Australian Rotary Youth Exchange Program Chairs’ Conference drafted a Student Protection Policy in October 2004. This policy was circulated to all 23 Australian Youth Exchange Chairs prior to presentation at the Australian Rotary Regional Institute in November 2004. At the Institute, this policy document was referred to a sub-committee for review.

In the interim many Districts adopted the ARYEPCC Student Protection Policy as their own District Youth Exchange Committee policy.

At the same time, RI, through General Secretary Ed Futa, raised the likelihood of RI moving to adopt a ‘certification process’, which Clubs and Districts who wished to participate in youth exchange would need to complete. The draft of RI’s ‘certification process’ was then released in June 2005 just prior to the RI Convention in Chicago.

The certification process required Districts to draft specific policies which encompass the requirements of the RI draft but were specific to the laws of customs of the country where each District is located.

At the annual meeting of the ARYEPCC in Canberra in August 2005, it was agreed that a ‘certification process’ for Australian Districts be drafted to assist Clubs and Districts meet the guidelines and minimum standards laid down by Rotary International. RI declared that ‘certification’ is **mandatory**. Without ‘certification’ a Club or District **was not** permitted to begin the selection of a youth exchange candidate after 1st July 2006.

Australian Districts already had very extensive abuse and harassment policies and procedures in place, which ensured the highest possible standard of care to those young people who participated in the program and for whom the Rotarians had responsibility. These guidelines and procedures were designed to assist Clubs and Districts achieve ‘certification’ with the minimum of fuss. They were developed to formalise the procedures Clubs and Districts were operating under, and these clubs and districts had much to be proud of in their development.

This certification process was also an important element in Rotary’s responsibility in demonstrating to our Insurers that we were serious about risk management in youth programs, and justifying the insurer’s decision in 2005-2006 to include molestation cover under the Rotary liability policy.

Summary

An Executive Summary of the Club and District Certification Documentation

RI directed that **all** Rotary Districts worldwide that wish to be involved in Youth Exchange must develop a **policy and documentation** that embody the requirements in the draft policy, the volunteer affidavit and the reporting guidelines they have issued. This material is required to comply with local laws and customs.

The policy developed and adopted by all Australian districts was approved by RI in December 2005. All districts had to send the Certification Application to Evanston before the **30 June 2006** deadline to be eligible to remain in the Youth Exchange program.

RI also directed that **all** Rotary Clubs who wished to be involved in Youth Exchange must confirm to their District that they will comply with the requirements of the Australian policy, volunteer declaration and reporting guidelines.

The Australian documentation formalised procedures already in place in most Australian Districts and Clubs.

People directly involved in caring for Youth Exchange students are required to have Police Checks or an equivalent legal form of certification. In addition, RI also requires reference checks for “**Volunteers**” i.e. the classification of people directly involved with students in the YEP. To keep the program workable, Australia introduced the classification of “**Responsible Adult**” for situations where the risk of abuse is negligible or very low.

RI also required documentation designed specifically for Youth Exchange be adapted by Districts to suit **other programs and activities**.

Effective after 01 July 2006, **individual Rotary Districts** are responsible for any **medical, legal or counselling costs** incurred as a result of sexual abuse or harassment. (Some of these costs may be recoverable under insurance).

Having been signed off by RI and adopted by all Districts, this documentation has become the National Australian Certification Standard embodying RI's risk management procedures. These procedures have also become common to all our international partners on their receiving certification.

Documents

There are two key documents DI 1 and CL 1. They present the procedure **most Australian Districts were following** before July 2006, in a form that complies with **RI's requirements**.

DI 1 This all embracing policy sets out the things a District must do to receive certification including their certification of Clubs in the District.

CL 1 This is a policy document for individual clubs listing the procedures RI requires them to follow to receive certification.

Some of the remaining documents simplify the procedure for those involved in Youth Exchange to receive certification and ensure students remain safe.

The balance of the documents comprises checklists, which enable those looking at the larger picture to see that all procedures have been followed. The vetting and training of key individuals in the program is seen as two of the most important factors in the protection policy.

- DI 2** A list of tips for students to assist them to keep themselves safe.
 - DI 3** This is the RI document that spells out precisely what **must** be done in the case of a reported instance of sexual abuse and harassment.
 - DI 4** Sets out the procedures to be used by the District Governor in assessing potential new members for the District Youth Exchange Committee, or by the District Committee.
 - DI 5** A check list to enable District Youth Exchange Committees to verify that many of the important tasks relating to inbound students have been carried out. The checklists are forwarded to the District Governor so he/she knows all is in order with Youth Exchange.
 - DI 6** A similar checklist to DI 5 but relates to the duties associated with outbound students.
 - CL 2** A guide to assist clubs to select suitable host families
 - CL 3** A similar document to CL 2 but designed to assist clubs in selecting a student counsellor or other volunteer who will have appreciable involvement with the student.
 - CL 4** A form designed to obtain information required by RI, in respect of people having direct contact with Youth Exchange students.
 - CL 5** Clubs will submit this document to their District Youth Exchange Committee to obtain certification to host an inbound student.
 - CL 6** Similar to CL 5 but will be used by a Club to receive certification to sponsor an outbound student. CL 5 and CL 6 are of necessity two separate documents because the timing relating to organising an outbound student varies appreciably from that of preparing for an inbound student
 - CL 7** A checklist for Clubs to confirm they have carried out all important duties. This form is passed to the District Committee so they also know a Club has fulfilled its obligations.
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