

## 1. Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth

District 7040 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.

Rotary District 7040 Youth Protection Policy applies to all District activities that involve minors and other vulnerable persons. This is not limited to the Youth Exchange Program but is all inclusive including EarlyAct, Interact, RYLA, Rotary Adventures, Dictionary4Life, Rotaract programs or any program involving youth. It would include a club that uses local students who are not part of a formal Rotary Youth Program on a highway cleanup, or any other project.

## 2. Definitions

**Volunteer** — Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who interacts directly with youth, whether supervised or unsupervised. Rotary volunteers include:

- Club and district youth program officers and committee members
- Rotary member and non-member counselors
- Members and non-members and their spouses and partners who work with students during activities or outings or who transport students to events
- Youth Exchange host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including host siblings and other family members

**Youth program participant** — Anyone who participates in a Rotary youth program, whether child or adult

**Vulnerable Person** - a *person* who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental illness, developmental disability or delay, other disability, age, illness, or emotional disturbance and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself or unable to protect himself or herself

## 3. Liability Insurance

The 7040 district clubs carry 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.

## 4. Club Compliance

The district governor is responsible for supervision and control of all youth activities in the district, including those associated with Rotary Youth Exchange. District 7040 will monitor all participating clubs and ensure that they comply with youth protection and Rotary Youth Exchange certification requirements.

All clubs that participate in Youth Programs must provide the district **annually** with a copy of the following for review and approval:

- A signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with District 7040 and RI policies.
- Confirmation that volunteers will be prohibited from contact with program participants until a written application, interview, reference check, a training module available in the RI Learning Center, and a vulnerable person's background check has been conducted and clearance for unsupervised contact with program participants has been issued.
- All club materials that advertise the Youth Exchange program, including brochures, applications, policies, and websites
- Any club youth protection training materials

A club that does not participate in any programs with youth must **annually** send a non-participation form signed by the club president to the Youth Protection Officer, copied to the District Governor.

## **5. Volunteer Selection and Screening**

RI will not tolerate any form of abuse or harassment.

All Rotary member and non-member volunteers who are interested in working with youth program participants must meet RI and district eligibility requirements. RI prohibits the membership and participation of any Rotarian or non-Rotary volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been known to have engaged in sexual abuse or sexual harassment or other act that violates the accepted standard of behavior in the community.

Districts will maintain confidential records of individuals prohibited from contact with youth and make sure that these prohibitions are implemented consistently throughout the district from year to year.

People who are prohibited from working with youth also may not serve as district Interact chair, Interact club adviser, district RYLA chair, district Youth Exchange chair, district youth protection officer, or in any other locally appointed club or district role in which they might have contact with youth.

If a person is accused of sexual abuse or harassment and law enforcement's investigation is inconclusive, or if law enforcement declines to investigate, additional safeguards are necessary to protect any youth program participants with whom the accused might have future contact, as well as the accused. A person who has been cleared of charges may apply to continue as a youth program volunteer. Such reinstatement is not a right, and reinstatement to a former position is not guaranteed.

All Youth Program Rotarian and **non-Rotarian** volunteers that have direct, unsupervised contact with program participants must:

1. Complete a volunteer agreement form. A new application is required whenever information changes or after 3 years of no change, provided there is an annual signature update in the space provided to certify no change.
  2. Undergo an annual criminal background check that varies by the geographical regions of our District. These checks are essentially obsolete the moment they are issued, necessitating an ANNUAL update. Again, it's a deterrence measure and the search must encompass both criminal and sex offender registries.
- **Procedure for Canadian Rotary Volunteers to obtain the required Criminal Background Check:**

Applications can be made to the local police departments. Where available, the Vulnerable Sector (VS) check the first year, followed by annual Criminal Record Checks, or a third-party background check provider, is acceptable. A third-party background check would be a company like Sterling Back Check, <https://www.sterlingbackcheck.ca/backcheck-canada/>. You need to let the Youth Protection officer know that you have done this.

- **Procedure for NY Rotary Volunteers to obtain the required Criminal Background Check:**

You are encouraged to work with a local volunteer organization to obtain a criminal background check. You can obtain your FBI criminal background check through a channeler that can expedite the process for an additional fee. [Here is a list of FBI Approved Background Check Channelers.](#)

3. Be interviewed, preferably in person or by video conferencing by someone from the club or by the District Youth Protection Officer.
4. Provide a list of personal references with contact information (it's recommended that references include no family members and no more than one Rotarian).
5. Take a sexual abuse and harassment training course. Effective youth protection policies may not prevent all incidents, but they can support the young people participating in Rotary programs and reduce negative outcomes. An interactive [learning module](#) can be found in the Learning Center of RI, look at the top of this page for the link. You must be logged into My Rotary to participate. If you prefer, an [e-learning module](#) is also available. If you're a club president or Rotarian who works with youth in any way, this module will help you to apply and address youth policies in your club or district. The site enables you to print a certificate once you have completed all requirements. You, or your club must keep this certificate for records keeping along with the other documents in the 5-step process. The training is good for 3 years. It is a good idea to renew this at the same time as renewing a volunteer application.

6. You can add the steps that a member has gone through to District Designations in a member's profile. See the file on the left about Member designations.

## **6. Training**

District 7040 and member clubs may provide further youth-protection training and information on youth programs through training sessions, provision of documents, and online learning sessions.

## **7. Allegation Handling and Follow-Through**

District 7040 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will handle them in accordance with the Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

The district 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.

District 7040 may appoint a youth protection officer or district review committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations regularly.

## **8. Travel by Youth**

Youth travel outside of the local community must comply with youth protection policies.

For all youth travel sponsored by District 7040 or its clubs, the following will be done before departure:

1. Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians of program participants
2. Give parents and legal guardians details about the travel, including locations, accommodations, itineraries, and the organizer's contact information
3. When traveling more than 150 miles, or 240 kilometers, from the residence, verify that program participants have adequate insurance, including benefits for medical services, emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, and legal liability

## **9. District 7040 Youth Exchange Administration**

The District 7040 Youth Exchange program, in collaboration with participating clubs, must develop and have a copy of its own administration program that is developed in accordance with RI practices and procedures. This also includes travel of Youth Exchange students.

## **10. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statement**

As a global network that strives to build a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change, Rotary values diversity and celebrates the contributions of people of all backgrounds, regardless of their age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Rotary will cultivate a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture in which people from underrepresented groups have greater opportunities to participate as members and leaders.