

Authorised District 9510 Rotary Youth Protection Policy Summary

Summary for use by Club Officers

Rotary District 9510 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 District 9510 Protection Policy Summary applies to those Rotarians, Rotaractors and non-Rotarians caring for young people who participate in Rotary Programs. All **adult leaders** will recognize and make all reasonable efforts to accommodate program participants from diverse backgrounds including (but not limited to) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, other ethnic groups, those with disabilities and young people from the LGBTIQ communities. This 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 the Australian States and Territory covered by District 9510. To participate in a Rotary program all **adult leaders** must agree to adhere to these requirements.

Glossary Terms are shown in the text in **Green**

Adult Leader	An adult over the age of 18 of sufficient maturity, training and experience to look after and guide youth program participants
Significant Period	Is the period of time which may allow grooming or abuse to occur. The length of this time will depend on the nature of each youth program and the vulnerability of its participants. A decision on the actual time is to be determined by the program leader in consultation with the District Protection Officer.
Child	A young person in a Rotary youth program under the age of 18 years.
RYE	Rotary Youth Exchange
Program Participant	A young person participating or applying to participate in a Rotary Youth Program
WWCC	A criminal history check - This state-run national check effectively identifies all sexual predators who have previously been caught or suspected. (Many offenders have not been caught so will not be identified.)
Young Person	Defined as a participant in a Rotary Youth Program who is aged 0 – 25 years old.

1. Screening and Suitability Checks

All Rotarians will bear in mind sexual predators often appear as respectable, conscientious, hardworking people; many however are skillful at infiltrating organisations where they will endeavor to be alone for a significant period with a young person.

1.1 Statistics tell us the **vast majority of sexual abuse cases** occur when a perpetrator is **alone** with a young victim for a **significant period**. To minimize this risk

-) Rotary's youth programs are to be designed or reorganized so that the **absolute minimum number** of **adult leaders** or **no adult leaders at all** will need or be allowed to be alone in a program with a young person for a **significant period**.
-) Where a program involves group **overnight accommodation**, **no** adult leaders are permitted to be **alone at all with a youth program participant** from the time they retire to prepare for bed, to the time they are fully dressed to rejoin the group after sleeping.
-) This absolute minimum number of **adult leaders** will obtain a **WWCC** and be checked as thoroughly as possible by **experienced interviewers** and, if approved, classified as **YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS**.
-) **Adult leaders** and youth program participants will be trained to understand – *Young people are very safe in groups and if they must be alone with an adult, the adult has to be a **YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER**.*

Screening and Suitability Checks continued

NOTE

- J In almost all of the relatively small number of abuse cases which have occurred in recent years in Australian Rotary Programs, the abusers **had** been reference checked. Unfortunately we cannot be certain a sexual predator will not get past even more our stringent checking.
- J This means every **YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER** in a program could be a **potential predator** in a position to abuse one of our young people. The smaller the number the less the risk.

1.2. **YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS** comprise the small group of **adult leaders** that

1.2.1. **MAY NEED AT TIMES TO BE ALONE WITH A YOUNG PERSON FOR A PERIOD OF TIME THAT COULD ALLOW GROOMING OR ABUSE TO OCCUR** or

1.2.2. are **Chairs of a District** or a **standalone Club Youth Programs** (a **RI** requirement) or

1.2.3. are the people in youth programs who **store personal information** about youth program participants e.g. **medical records** (a state government requirement)

1.3. The thorough checking of these **people involves** ---

1.3.1. their completing an **Information and Declaration Form** naming **three referees**

1.3.2. their obtaining a **WWCC**

1.3.3. the **District Protection Officer (DPO)** arranging for them and their referees being **interviewed**.

Only when the experienced interviewer has carefully carried out the interviews, checked all of the above and **found a Candidate** to be a **suitable** person can they be defined as a **YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER** and allowed to work at times **alone** with a young person.

1.4. **RESPONSIBLE ADULT**, the classification required for all other adult leaders working or assisting in Rotary Youth Programs who --

1.4.1 the person responsible for the wellbeing of a program participant at the time (e.g. their Rotary host parent, counsellor, program chair, adult leader or club president) would authorise another adult to care for the program participant on the basis they **ARE SATISFIED IN THE SAME WAY A CONCIENTIOUS PARENT WOULD BE SATISFIED THAT THIS ADULT IS SUITABLE FOR THEIR OWN SON OR DAUGHTER TO BE CARED FOR OR INSTRUCTED OR GUIDED BY WHEN THEIR SON OR DAUGHTER WAS OF THE SAME AGE AND IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES**.

1.4.2. in a family or group situation, for a short time, is responsible for caring for a young Rotary applicant or participant or for assisting in a Rotary youth program.

1.4.3. is in a position to offer the young person guidance, assistance or an educational, cultural or recreational experience.

1.4.4. who it is planned **will always**, when with the young person, **be with one or more RESPONSIBLE ADULTS** or with **other young people** and therefore is not alone with the young person for a **significant period**.

1.4.5. does not require reference checks and may not need a **WWCC**. (See statement below)

It should be noted that state law changes in District 9510 make it a requirement that those **RESPONSIBLE ADULTS** working directly in a Rotary youth program also now require a **WWCC** check. In South Australia this applies if they are working for more than a total of seven days in a year.

1.6. The suitability of **all volunteers** in Rotary Youth Programs (RYP) will be **carefully assessed in accordance with their roles**.

1.7. It is essential the caring atmosphere predominant in our youth programs is maintained and nurtured. **Any signs of bullying or harassment** by either **adult leaders** or program participants are to be recognized and **eliminated** as soon as it appears.

2. General Club and District Requirements

- 2.1. It is mandatory that at the stipulated time all Youth Program Chairs or their Compliance Officers **ensure the completion and submission of** any of the other required **forms**, as set down in the respective program manual(s)
- 2.2. All the required **Forms** must be **securely stored** in accordance with the District Policy stated on the forms and made **available only to people who are required for the wellbeing of the program participant to see them**. Copies of all the forms so labelled must be sent to the **District Protection Officer** for **document retention** purposes.
- 2.3. No youth program or activity can commence until a **YP 8 Form** (Master Protection Policy - Appendix 6) is completed and emailed to the **DPO** for approval. This must be done a minimum of **3 weeks before the program or event** commences. Similarly a **Risk Assessment** of a program or event must be carried out and the appropriate form emailed to the **District Insurance Officer (DIO)** a minimum of **2 weeks before the program or event** commences.
- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. All Rotary clubs will have a **Protection Officer (CPO)** whose duties involve ensuring the appropriate club officers promptly complete all required documentation and the club officers and members treat any **young people** under the club's jurisdiction with respect in accordance with the regulations. The CPO is not to have direct involvement with youth program participants.
- 2.6. The District has a **DPO** and Committee. The **DPO** will **train or arrange protection training** for the **adult leaders** involved in vulnerable people programs. Should there be an **abuse or harassment incident** in the District (where the police are not involved) the **DPO will investigate** calling on outside experts if needed.

3. Requirements Relating to Young People

- 3.1. **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**.
- 3.2. The utmost must be done to give young people in **RYPs** the **confidence to seek our help** should they have a **problem, big or small**, knowing we will:
 - 3.2.1. **listen sympathetically**
 - 3.2.2. **respond promptly, effectively** and with **compassion**
- 3.3. Young people in **RYPs** will be briefed and **the Program Director will ensure they are given a list of responsible people and organisations** in and outside Rotary they can approach if they have an abuse or harassment issue.
- 3.4. We will stress, should they **have a problem**, they are free to approach **whichever person** on the list **they feel most comfortable talking to**.
- 3.5. A condition of joining or remaining in a **RYP** is that **all participants agree** to follow the **rules and instructions** relating to that program.
- 3.6. At the conclusion of a Youth Program, participants will be given the **opportunity to offer comments** about the program during a debrief. All comments will be **seriously considered**.
- 3.7. **Images** of young people must **not be displayed or published** without the **consent** of the **young people** and if they are underage, their **parents or guardians'** permission must also be obtained.
- 3.8. Bodily **contact** (hugs, kisses) between young people in Rotary programs and **adult leaders must not occur unless invited by the young person**. Even if invited the contact must be **brief** with hugs made from the side never the front. This rule is particularly important where the **young person** and the **adult leader** are of a **different gender**.
- 3.9. Should a Rotarian know or have a reasonable suspicion that a **child has been abused, harassed, mistreated or neglected** it is their obligation to **notify the appropriate state or territory authorities**. It is not a requirement to have proof or evidence as it is the role of the state authorities to investigate. The authorities will advise if they will investigate the matter.

4. Transporting Young People in Rotary Programs

- 4.1. The driver must be **fully licensed** for a minimum of one year, the vehicle **registered** and it must also carry **comprehensive third party insurance**.
- 4.2. **For short Journeys** from the young person's home to Rotary or around the local area the **driver must be a RESPONSIBLE ADULT**. Wherever possible a second adult should be in the car.
- 4.3. For longer journeys **up to 2 hours** there must be at least **two RESPONSIBLE ADULTS** in the car with the young person's being in the **backseat**. One of the adults must be the **same gender as the young person**.
- 4.4. For **longer Journeys** the driver **must be a YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER** or **alternatively** there must be **several young people in the car** with **two RESPONSIBLE ADULTS** with the gender of one or more of the adults **matching** those of the **young people**.
- 4.5. In an **emergency** any driver **approved by the young person's current Guardians** or their deputy may **drive the student wherever necessary** or they may be driven by ambulance. **Common sense must always prevail**.

5. 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 those they may approach treat them with care and compassion.

- 5.1. Any **adult leader** who it is felt a **young person** in a Rotary Youth Program may approach if they are abused or seriously harassed is to be **briefed on the way to respond** and given a copy of the highlighted section of the **RI Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines**. (see Master Protection Policy – Appendix 3)
- 5.2. The process following an allegation is to:
 - 5.2.1. **Listen attentively** and **sympathetically, stay calm** and **neutral**. When you have heard their story persuade them to **go promptly** with you **to the police** (so forensic evidence if available is not lost)
 - 5.2.2. **Ensure the safety** of the **young person**
 - 5.2.3. **Notify** the **DPO** or the **District Governor (DG) a.s.a.p.**
 - 5.2.6. Do **not contact the accused**
 - 5.2.7. Do **not** talk about or **tell others** about the incident
- 5.3. The **DPO** or **DG** is to **advise RI Parramatta** of any incident of abuse or serious harassment **within 72 hours** of the incident's being first reported, **submitting a Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report**.
- 5.4. In all matters where the police are involved, Rotary must allow them to investigate and report.
- 5.5. Where the **police do not investigate**, the **District Protection Committee** will conduct a **thorough investigation** using experts outside Rotary as necessary or as requested by the victim or the victim's legal guardians.

The full **RI Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines** as adopted for District 9510 and summarized in the above clauses is available in the District 9510 Youth Protection Policy on the District website.

- 5.6. All Rotarians and those assisting in **RYPs** are to be **aware that behavioural or mood changes** in young people 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.

6. 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 or unfamiliar language requires our help and understanding.

- 6.1. **RYE** is a District program **administered for clubs** by the District Youth Exchange Committee.
- 6.2. The District Youth Exchange Committee is required to ensure all inbound and outbound students, inbound and outbound club counsellors, and all natural or host families involved **attend** and receive **comprehensive training**.

- 6.3. All Rotary Clubs wishing to be **involved** in either **sponsoring** or **hosting** an exchange student must **apply** to the District Youth Exchange Committee **for certification** to do so. This is done by signing and submitting the required forms declaring they are aware of and will abide by the requirements.
- 6.4. All **RYE** students must be given an **inbound or outbound counsellor** of the **same sex** and not a host family member to assist and guide them. This is a **critical role** requiring the appointment of an **experienced person**.
- 6.5. 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**.
- 6.6. Being away from family, friends and their home country may make exchange students **vulnerable to cyber bullying or grooming** which could lead to **sexual abuse**. Host parents and counsellors need to give **students guidance** on use of the internet and **be alert for any behavioral changes**, (see 5.6).
- 6.7. It is important the **counsellors and the student** are in **regular communication** before and during their time overseas or time hosted in Australia.
- 6.8. **Specific rules** have been designed for the YE Program and it is very important these rules **are followed** by all involved.
- 6.9. **RYE** students are obliged to send **regular reports** to both their **host and sponsoring District Counsellors**. It is important club counsellors ensure this is done.
- 6.10. **Before a host family's appointment** is confirmed they will be **visited and briefed** in the family home by two members of the Rotary club who will ensure the family fully **understands their role** and responsibilities as host parents. The Rotarians will also ascertain that their **home is suitable**.
- 6.11. All **adult members** of the host family living with the student and the **club counsellor** must be **screened as YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS**.
- 6.12. 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.
- 6.13. The District **Youth Exchange Committee** is required by **RI** to have a **dedicated mobile phone** available 24 hours a day for emergency student contact.
- 6.14. 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.

Assistance

For information, guidance or clarification on any youth protection procedures or matters, consult the DISTRICT PROTECTION OFFICER. For Insurance matters consult the DISTRICT INSURANCE OFFICER. For those wishing to do more research themselves, the following resources are available.

-)] District 9510 Master Protection Policy
-)] District 9510 Youth Exchange Manuals
-)] District 9510 Short Rotary Youth Programs
-)] Rotary International – Rotary Youth Protection Guide
-)] Rotary National Insurance Committee
-)] Aon Risk Solutions
-)] **RI** Online training – Register on My Rotary –
<https://learn.rotary.org/members/learn/course/422/ProtectingYouthProgramParticipants>

Document Control – This document is to be reviewed annually by the DPO

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