

DISTRICT 7475 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Developing and implementing an effective youth protection policy demonstrates District 7475's commitment to protecting Rotary youth program participants. This document provides a basic framework for a district policy for all youth programs. Participants in Rotary Youth Exchange will also be required to comply with additional requirements established by Rotary International and the Eastern States Student Exchange (ESSEX).

1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 7475 (the "district") 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 psychological abuse.

2. Definitions

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

Rotary and Rotaract volunteers include but are not limited to:

- Rotary and Interact club and district youth program officers and committee members
- Rotary and Rotaract member and nonmember youth counselors
- Rotary and Rotaract members and nonmembers and their spouses and partners who work with youth during activities or outings or who transport youth to events
- Youth Exchange host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including host siblings and other family members
- Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) Staff, Counselors and Volunteers
- Interact Club Advisors and Rotary Club, Rotaract Club, and district Interact committee members
- Rotary and Rotaract members who review youth documents containing personally identifiable information, including but not limited to scholarship applications and RYLA applications.

Youth program participant — Anyone who participates in a Rotary youth program, regardless of age.

3. Legal Entity and Liability Insurance

Rotary International District 7475 is a 501(c)4 Association formed under the laws of the state of New Jersey, USA in 2018 and is valid at this time.

District 7475 carries 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 supervising and controlling all youth activities in the district, including those associated with Rotary Youth Exchange. The district will monitor all participating clubs and ensure that they comply with youth protection and Rotary Youth Exchange certification requirements.

All clubs that participate in Rotary Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact or other youth program must provide the district 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 and RI policies. This statement is available for download on the district [Youth Protection webpage](#).
- Confirmation that volunteers will be prohibited from contact with program participants until a written application, interview, reference check, and criminal background check have 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

5. Volunteer Selection and Screening

RI will not tolerate any form of abuse or harassment.

All Rotary and Rotaract member and nonmember 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 Rotary or Rotaract member 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 Rotary and Rotaract member and nonmember Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact or other youth program volunteers who have direct, unsupervised contact with program participants must:

- Complete a district volunteer application form
- Undergo a criminal background check provided
- Be interviewed, preferably in person
- For Youth Exchange host families, the interview determines suitability. It should demonstrate:
 - Commitment to the safety and security of students
 - Appropriate motives for hosting a student consistent with Rotary's ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
 - Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student
 - Ability to provide appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well-being
- Provide a list of personal references and their contact information (references may not include family members and no more than one Rotary member)
- Comply with RI and district guidelines for the Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact or other youth program
- Rotary and Rotaract members participating in Rotary Youth Exchange will be required to comply with all requirements of Rotary International and ESSEX.

Youth Exchange host families must also:

- Undergo announced and unannounced home visits both before and during the placement; home visits must be conducted during each year the family participates, even for repeat host families

Note: All adult residents of the host home must meet all selection and screening guidelines. This includes adult children of the host family and other members of the extended family or household staff who are full-time or part-time residents of the home.

Youth Exchange students must be assigned a Rotary counselor who meets the criteria for all volunteers. Also:

- A counselor must not hold a role of authority over the student's exchange (for example, a member of a student's host family, school principal, club president, or district or club Youth Exchange officer)
- Counselors must be able to respond to any problems or concerns that may arise, including instances of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse or harassment

6. Participant Selection and Screening

All students who are interested in the district Youth Exchange program must meet district and ESSEX guidelines and:

- Complete a written application
- Be interviewed by the sending club and/or district
- Attend and participate in all club, district and ESSEX orientation and training sessions

All parents or legal guardians of Youth Exchange participants must also be interviewed at the club or district level to determine the student's suitability to participate in the program.

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- Counselors must be able to respond to any problems or concerns that may arise, including instances of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse or harassment

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- Attend and participate in all club, district and ESSEX orientation and training sessions

All parents or legal guardians of Youth Exchange participants must also be interviewed at the club or district level to determine the student's suitability to participate in the program.

8. Training

The district and its clubs will require that all Rotary and Rotaract members involved in youth programs will take all training and learning courses required and provided by Rotary International. All Rotary and Rotaract members involved in Rotary Youth Exchange will also take all training and learning courses required by Rotary International and ESSEX.

The district Youth Exchange committee will ensure all students and volunteers participating in Rotary Youth Exchange will receive all youth protection training and information provided by Rotary International and ESSEX.

The district will:

- Adapt Rotary's Youth Protection Guide to reflect district guidelines, information on local customs and culture, and legal requirements
- Develop a schedule that specifies who will be trained, how often, and in what formats
- Ensure that the following receive all required Rotary International and ESSEX training and learning programs required for those involved in Youth Exchange:
 - District Governor
 - District Youth Exchange officer and committee members
 - Club Youth Exchange officer and committee members
 - Rotary counselors
 - Other Rotary members and nonmembers who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours or district events
 - Host families
 - Students (outbound and inbound)
- Maintain records of participation

9. Responding to Allegations

The district takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will handle them in accordance with the district's Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines available on the district [Youth Protection webpage](#).

The district will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations.

The district will appoint a youth protection officer to advise it and its clubs on abuse and harassment prevention and to help manage risks and any crises that affect the safety of youth. The youth protection officer will have professional experience in counseling, social work, law, law enforcement, or child development, and may or may not be a Rotary member.

The district will develop a crisis management plan as outlined in Rotary's Youth Protection Guide.

10. Travel by Youth

Youth travel outside of the community must comply with RI, ESSEX and district youth protection policies.

For all youth travel sponsored by the district or its clubs, before departure, the host district must:

- Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians of all youth program participants
- Give parents or legal guardians details about the travel, including locations, accommodations, itineraries, and the organizer's contact information
- Recommended but not required: when traveling more than 150 miles, or 240 kilometers, from the home residence or out of the home country, verify that program participants have adequate insurance, including benefits for medical service, emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, and legal liability in amounts satisfactory to the club or district that is organizing the activity or event, with coverage from the participants' departure until their return
- In addition, for Youth Exchange travel outside of students' host communities or that is not customarily a part of the exchange program, either with their host families or to attend Rotary events, the host district shall receive authorization from the sending district in advance

11. District Youth Exchange Administration

The district Youth Exchange program, in collaboration with participating clubs, must also:

- Confirm that all inbound students have at least the minimum insurance that is required by the Rotary Code of Policies (Because the host district must be able to arrange immediate and emergency medical attention when it is needed, it must be satisfied that the student's coverage is adequate)
- Store participant and volunteer records securely after participation, in accordance with all applicable privacy laws
- Provide each student with a list of local services (rape and suicide crisis hotlines; alcohol and drug awareness programs; relevant law enforcement agencies; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer services; etc.). This list must also include the following contacts:
 - For inbound students: host Rotary counselor, host club president, host district Youth Exchange chair, host District Governor, and at least two nonmember resource people (one male and one female) who are not related to each other and do not have close ties to the host families or the Rotary counselor and who can help the students with any problems
 - For outbound students: sending Rotary counselor, sending club president, sending district Youth Exchange chair, sending District Governor
- Complete an annual survey reporting on program activity for RI
- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to students
- Report all incidents (including abuse or harassment allegations, accidents, crimes, early returns, and death) that involve Youth Exchange students to RI staff (youthprotection@rotary.org within 72 hours of learning of the incident)
- Prohibit any unauthorized exchange activity, such as sending a student on exchange outside of the Rotary Youth Exchange program or outside of the district certification structure
- Develop contingency hosting plans that list prescreened families. Establish the criteria and procedures for removing a student from the host family. Arrange for temporary contingent housing in advance.
- Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host inbound students as a condition of sending students on an exchange.
- Have long-term program participants stay with multiple host families, if possible. It is recommended that they be placed with three host families during their exchange. If circumstances prevent multiple host family placements, the sending and the host district must agree and must inform the student's parent or legal guardian in advance. At least one backup host family must be available.
- Request a monthly report from each inbound and outbound program participant that includes information on their current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange committee can review the reports and assist program participants as needed.