

DISTRICT YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Developing and implementing an effective youth protection policy demonstrates a district's commitment to protecting Rotary youth program participants. This document provides a basic framework for a district policy for all youth programs.

DISTRICT 5470 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 5470 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.

2. Definitions

All Youth Events - Volunteer — Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who interacts directly with youth, whether supervised or unsupervised

RYE - volunteers include, among others, club and district Youth Exchange officers and committee members; Rotarian counselors; Rotarians and non-Rotarians and their spouses and partners who work with students during activities or outings or who transport students to events; and 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

3. Incorporation and Liability Insurance

All Youth - Youth activities are part of the District 5470 and are covered by any and all insurance provided by the district. Coordinators of any youth event must register online for event insurance.

RYE - The District 5470 Rotary Youth Exchange Program is part of District 5470 and is covered by any and all of the insurance provided by the district.

4. Club Compliance

All Youth - The district governor is responsible for supervision and control of all youth activities in the district. The district will ensure that all clubs comply with youth protection requirements.

RYE - District 5470 will monitor all participating clubs and ensure that they comply with youth protection and Rotary Youth Exchange certification requirements. The district governor will become vetted each year and will have access to the YEAH software system.

All clubs that participate in Rotary Youth Exchange must provide the district via the YEAH program a copy of the following information for review and approval:

- A signed host club agreement that the club is operating its program in accordance with District 5470 and RI policies
- Confirmation that volunteers may, at the YEO's discretion, 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

All Youth - All Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers interested in working with youth program participants must meet RI and district 5470 eligibility requirements. RI prohibits the membership and participation of any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment.

If a person is accused of sexual abuse or harassment and the law enforcement investigation is inconclusive, or if law enforcement declines to investigate, additional safeguards are necessary to protect any youth program participants with whom the accused may have future contact, as well as the accused. A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated as a youth program volunteer. Reinstatement is not a right, and reinstatement to his or her former position is not guaranteed.

RYE –The first step in safeguarding students is to assure the quality of individuals involved in the program as organizers and supervisors or those who have frequent one-on-one contact with students. These Active Volunteers (including Host Families and Club Counselors who have additional requirements) must have completed the following screening and been approved for participation in District 5470 Rotary Youth Exchange programs by the District RYE Chair prior to involvement with the student:

Active Volunteers:

- Complete a Youth Volunteer Affidavit on-line in the YEAH database system
- Complete and pass a Criminal Background Check and a National Sex Offender Report.
- Provide three references
- Meet Rotary International and District 5470 eligibility requirements for working with students. RI requires that any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. If an individual is accused of sexual abuse or harassment, and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, then, for the safety of the student(s) and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the security of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. An accused person who has been cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated to participate in youth programs. Reinstatement is not a right and no guarantee is made that he/she will be reinstated to his or her former position.

- Understand and comply with RI and District 5470 guidelines for the Youth Exchange program.
- Be vetted by the District Compliance Officer and approved by the District RYE Chair.

Youth Exchange host families must also meet these selection and screening requirements:

- Undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability, demonstrating:
 - Commitment to the safety and security of students
 - Appropriate motives for hosting a student that are consistent with Rotary 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
- Complete a written application
- Undergo home visits with and without notice, both before and during the placement; home visits must be conducted annually, 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 appointed a Rotarian counselor who meets the criteria for all volunteers. Also:

- A counselor must not be a member of the student's host family. It is also recommended that counselors not hold another role of authority with respect to the student's exchange (e.g., school principal, club president, district Youth Exchange chair).
- Counselors must be able to respond to any problems or concerns that may arise, including instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

6. Participant Selection and Screening

All students interested in the District 5470 Youth Exchange program must meet district guidelines and:

- Complete a written application
- Be interviewed at the club and district levels
- Attend and participate in all club and district 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 for program participation.

7. Training

All Youth - District 5470 and member clubs will provide youth-protection training and information on youth programs. District 5470 will conduct the training sessions for all Assistant Governors, Club Presidents, and President Elects.

RYE - The District 5470 Mountain and Plains Youth Exchange program must provide youth-protection training and information to all students and volunteers. District 5470 will conduct the training sessions for all

Assistant Governors, Club Presidents, and Presidents Elect at annual District training or via webinars on the District website. Specifically, through the RYE committee, District 5470 will:

- Adapt Rotary's Youth Protection Guide to reflect district guidelines, information on local customs and culture, and legal requirements
- Develop a training schedule that specifies who will be trained, how often, and in what format
- Conduct specialized training for those involved in Youth Exchange:
 - District governor
 - District Youth Exchange officer and committee members
 - Club Youth Exchange officer and committee members
 - Rotarian Youth Exchange counselors
 - Other Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours or district events
 - Host families
 - Students (outbound and inbound) with a single focus of Youth Protection
 - Parents of Outbound Students
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance

8. Allegation Handling and Follow-Through

All Youth - District 5470 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will handle them in accordance with the Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines. In addition,

All allegations and incidents will be reported as outlined in the Communication Protocol.

The District 5470 Governor will appoint a youth protection officer and/or a district review committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations regularly.

RYE – District 5470 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will handle them in accordance with the Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines. In addition, **All allegations and incidents will be reported as outlined in the Communication Protocol.**

District 5470 and the *Mountain and Plains Rotary Youth Exchange organization* 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.

The District 5470 Governor may appoint a youth protection officer and/or a district review committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations regularly.

Communication Protocol

When an allegation of harassment or abuse is received by any Rotarian, the following steps will be followed within 24 hours:

- Notification of the Youth Protection Officer as soon as possible
- Notification of the District Governor as soon as possible.
- Notification of the RYE Chairman

- All other adults will be notified on a “need to know” basis as determined by the YPO, the DG and the RYE Chairman.

The District Governor will serve as the communications officer when addressing the media, if necessary.

9. Travel by Youth

All Youth - Any travel sponsored by District 5470 or its clubs, the following will be done before departure:

- Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians of program participants
- Give parents and legal guardians details about the travel, including locations, accommodations, itineraries, and the organizer’s contact information
- 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

RYE -

For the travel of Youth Exchange students outside their host communities, either with their host families or to attend Rotary events, District 5470 shall obtain written or electronic (email thread) permission from the students’ parents or legal guardians. Youth travel outside of the local community must comply with the attached Inbound Youth Travel Policy.

For all other Youth Exchange student travel that is not customarily a part of the exchange program, organizers must:

- Receive authorization from District 5470 in advance
- Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians for travel outside of the local host community
- Provide parents or legal guardians details about the trip, including locations, accommodations, itineraries, and the organizer’s contact information

10. District 5470 Youth Exchange Administrative Duties

The District 5470 Youth Exchange program, in collaboration with participating clubs, must also:

- Confirm that all inbound students have insurance that meets or exceeds what is prescribed in the Rotary Code of Policies.
- Store participant and volunteer records securely on the YEAH server for 3 years after participation, in accordance with all applicable privacy laws.
- Provide each student a list of local services (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.). This list must include the following district and club contacts:
 - For inbound students: Rotarian counselor, host club president, host district Youth Exchange chair, and host district governor
 - For outbound students: Rotarian counselor, sponsor club president, sponsor district Youth Exchange chair, sponsor district governor

- Provide each student with the names and contact information of at least two non-Rotarian 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 Rotarian counselor — who can help the students with any problems.
- Submit inbound program participants' data to RI before or shortly after the exchange begins.
- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to students.
- Report all serious incidents (abuse or harassment allegations, accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI Youth Exchange staff within 72 hours.
- Prohibit placement of students outside of the district Youth Exchange program structure ("backdoor" exchanges).
- Establish criteria and procedures for a student's removal from the host family and arrange for contingent, temporary housing in advance.
- Develop contingency hosting plans that include prescreened families.
- Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host inbound students.
- Ensure that long-term program participants have multiple host families. It is recommended that long-term program participants be placed with three host families during their exchange.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
- Request a monthly report from each inbound and outbound program participant that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange chair can then review the reports and assist program participants as needed.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL'S 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.

Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, November 2006

Attachments

- Inbound Student Travel Policy

Addendum

The attached document provides recommended protocols for clubs to follow:

- Safe Environment Protocol
- Recommended ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES