



**ROTARY AUSTRALIA YOUTH ABUSE AND
HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY
&
CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

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ROTARY AUSTRALIA YOUTH ABUSE AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY & CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

This policy may be adapted for all Rotary programs involving youth

All Australian Districts are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and any other 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.

1. **Definitions**

Volunteer:

Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Program activities that has direct interactions, either supervised or unsupervised, with youths/students. Volunteers include, among others: club and district Youth Exchange officers and committee members; Rotarian counsellors; Rotarians and non-Rotarians and their spouses and partners who host youths/students for activities or outings or who might drive students to events or functions; and host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including siblings and other family members. This person will have been police checked or formally reference checked in accordance with (Insert State/s) legislation.

Responsible Adult:

A responsible adult is any adult who, in a family or group situation for a short period of time, is responsible for caring for a youth/exchange student.

This person shall be in a position to offer the youth/student an educational, cultural or recreational experience.

This person will not have been police checked or formally reference checked because either there was insufficient time to do so before the experience, or the experience is such that there is virtually no opportunity for misconduct to occur.

The youth/student's host family and/or club counsellor needs to be satisfied, in the same way a conscientious parent would be satisfied, that this person is suitable for their own underage son or daughter to stay with for a short period of time.

Counsellor – Club & District:

A Rotarian or approved non-Rotarian who serves on a Youth Exchange Committee, who liaises between the inbound/outbound student, Rotary club, host family, and community at large. The Counsellor plays a crucial role in the success of the student's exchange, and serves as a primary Rotary contact for the student, by way of support and guidance during his/her transition into the country and the community through regular personal contact throughout the year.

The Counsellor shall be trained to respond to problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including allegations of abuse or harassment. Counsellors shall be assigned to every outbound and inbound student in all exchange programs. Outbound student Counsellors shall prepare students for the exchange and maintain regular contact while the student is abroad.

Youth/Student:

Any individual who is participating in a Rotary Youth Program, regardless of whether he or she is of legal age of majority.

Sexual Abuse:

Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite gender. This includes non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitise or groom their victims.

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.

Emotional Harassment:

Emotional harassment is any action or comment which unreasonably disturbs the youth/student. This includes but is not limited to repeated comments about a youth/student's social background, home country, language, culture, personal appearance or other characteristics which are offensive, embarrassing or humiliating to the student to whom they were directed.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is any physical harm inflicted on a youth/student and includes but is not limited to:

- Providing insufficient nourishment for the youth/student
- Depriving the youth/student of a reasonable amount of sleep
- Requiring the youth/student to do an unreasonable amount of work
- Inflicting physical pain on the youth/student

Abuse & Harassment:

Abuse and harassment refers to any form of harmful treatment described above whether it is sexual, emotional or physical.

Travel:

Travel refers to Youth Exchange students' movements away from their usual hosted address. All travel which is more than overnight, away from their usual address and outside the immediate area of the community, must be approved and authorised by all parties upon the completion of the relative "Travel Request Form". Interstate or overseas travel always requires authorisation by the District Chair.

This definition excludes normal day to day local activities in accordance with inter district agreements.

Transportation:

Refers to the conveyance of youths/students by private transport. It is important to recognise that the following guideline is given to assist Rotary clubs and volunteers when a youth/student is being transported in a vehicle with the driver only, and common sense should be applied in all circumstances. It should be understood that these guidelines are to the benefit of both youth/student and driver alike.

This definition excludes normal day to day local activities.

It is recommended practice that in the circumstances where there is just youth/student and driver only in a vehicle, that such transport is restricted to the immediate area of the community, and such person shall be an approved driver with no less than one year's driving experience.

In the event that the journey is a tour, sightseeing or the like, it is recommended that a third person or more be present.

2. Incorporation of District YEP Committee and Liability Insurance

All Australian Youth Exchange Committees are incorporated individually or included under their district incorporation in accordance with applicable State and Territory legislation.

Rotary Districts of Australia have liability insurance provided under the National Australia Liability Insurance policy with an indemnity limit of \$50,000,000. The policy also provides molestation cover with an indemnity limit of \$2,000,000.

3. Volunteer Selection and Screening

All districts shall maintain a register of Volunteer Declarations and Police checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors for 5 years in keeping with Australian privacy laws.

All volunteers interested in participating in District Youth Programs must meet the following requirements:

- Complete the Youth Volunteer Declaration Form authorising the district to obtain a Police clearance. *(Form 4)*
- Undergo personal interviews.
- Provide a list of references for the district to check.
- Meet RI and district eligibility requirements for working with students. **(RI policy prohibits any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in abuse or harassment from working with youth in a Rotary context. If an individual is accused of abuse or harassment and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, additional safeguards must be put in place to ensure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact as well as for the protection of the accused. A person later 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 or she will be reinstated to his or her former position).**
- Understand and comply with RI and district policies for youth programs.

Host families must meet the following selection and screening requirements, in addition to those listed above:

- Host families must undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability for hosting students. (*Form 1*)
- Host families must demonstrate:
 - Commitment to the safety and security of students.
 - Motivation for hosting a student 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.
- Host families must complete a written application.
- Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include announced and unannounced visits, both before and during the placement. Home visits must be conducted annually, even for repeat host families.
- All adult residents of the host home must meet the selection and screening guidelines. This includes adult children of the host family and other members of the extended family who are permanent or part-time residents in the home.
- Single parent hosting is not generally recommended however should be determined on the particular circumstances.

Rotarian counsellors must meet the criteria for all volunteers, as well as the following:

- Counsellors must not be a member of the student's host family.
- Counsellors must be trained in responding to a variety of problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including instances of abuse or harassment. (*Appendix 1*)

4. Youth/Student Selection and Screening

All students interested in participating in the Australian Youth Exchange program must meet these requirements:

- Complete a written application and be interviewed by Club and District to determine suitability for participation in the program.
- Attend and participate in all district orientation and training sessions.

Parents or legal guardians of students interested in participating in the Australian Youth Exchange program must be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the program.

Youths/students applying for other Rotary youth programs must meet the requirements as determined by the relevant program committee.

5. Training

All districts shall provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all clubs. The District Trainer and/or District Compliance/Protection Officer will ensure the training sessions are conducted.

Specifically, Districts shall:

- Adapt the Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leader’s Guide to incorporate specific district guidelines, information on local customs and cultural issues, and legal requirements.
- Develop a training calendar that defines the participants, frequency of training required for each volunteer position, and training methods to be used.
- Conduct specialised training sessions on the Rotary Youth Exchange Program for:
 - District governor.
 - Assistant governors.
 - District Youth Exchange committee members.
 - Club Youth Exchange committee.
 - Club counsellors.
 - Other Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours or district events.
 - Host families.
 - Students (outbound and inbound).
 - Parents and legal guardians of students.
- Establish guidelines to ensure that all participants have received the requisite training
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance.

6. **Allegation Reporting Guidelines**

Australian Districts are committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Youth Exchange students and participants in other Rotary Youth Programs and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously. Sexual Abuse and Harassment allegations must be handled in accordance with the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines. (*Appendix 1*)

7. **Follow-through and Review Guidelines**

Districts shall take all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and shall ensure that each allegation is investigated thoroughly. The district will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with other investigations when conducting its own independent reviews.

8. **Other District Responsibilities**

- Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and handling non-criminal offenses or historical cases that law enforcement chooses not to investigate.
- Recommend that all **inbound** Youth Exchange students maintain insurance at the following minimums levels:

➤ Overseas Medical	US\$1,000,000
➤ Accidental Death	US\$25,000
➤ Capital Benefits	US\$100,000
➤ Emergency Evacuation	US\$100,000
➤ Legal Liability	US\$5,000,000
- Provide each student with a list of local services in the district (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.).
- Complete a student data request form for all participating Youth Exchange students and return it to RI one month before the exchange begins.

- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to Youth Exchange students.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Appoint an independent lawyer, therapist, or counsellor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours.
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI within 72 hours.
- Evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures regularly.
- Appoint a district review committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations annually.
- Appoint a District Compliance/Protection Officer.
- Require a monthly report from each inbound and outbound exchange student in the district that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange chair can then review the reports and assist students as needed.
- Consider designating a mobile phone as a permanent district hotline. Assign a Rotarian in the district to be on-call for a given period and carry the phone 24 hours a day.

9. Club Compliance

Districts will monitor all participating clubs within the district and ensure that they comply with RI guidelines for abuse and harassment prevention. All clubs that wish to apply to the district for certification must provide the district with a copy of the following for review and approval:

- All materials produced in the club to promote and support the Youth Exchange program, including promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
- List of services in the area (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Club abuse and harassment prevention training program materials

Participating clubs must agree to carry out the following:

- Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with the Australian and RI policies.
- If not coordinated by the district, conduct Police checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to, adult residents of host home, counsellor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact with youth. All volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Declaration.
- Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both before and during the placement.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
- Follow the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines.
- Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the Australian Youth Exchange program structure (so-called backdoor exchanges).
- Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family, including establishing criteria for moving a student and locating available back-up temporary housing in advance.
- Develop contingency hosting plans that include pre-screened, available back-up families.

- Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host students.
- Ensure that long-term exchange students have multiple host families.
- Provide each student with a comprehensive local services list, including information for dentists, doctors, places of worship, counsellors, suicide and rape crisis hotlines, etc.
- Ensure that the host counsellor for each student is not a member of the student's host family.
- Ensure that the host counsellor is trained in responding to any problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or harassment.
- Provide mandatory training on abuse and harassment prevention for host families, outbound students, inbound students, and their parents or legal guardians.
- Provide the names and contact information of at least three people — both males and females who are not related to each other and do not have close ties to the host families or club counsellor — who can help the students with any issues or problems.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, deaths) involving Youth Exchange students to the district immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.
- Appoint a club youth protection officer.
- Place students in two or more successive host families on long-term exchanges.
- Establish a system of club recertification that requires each club to provide copies of all information for review and approval.
- Prohibit volunteers from having unsupervised contact with students until a background check has been conducted and clearance for unsupervised contact with students has been issued.

Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. The safety and well-being of young people must always be the first priority.

Definitions

Sexual abuse:

Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite sex. This includes non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

Sexual harassment:

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitise or groom their victims. Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

Who should determine if it is abuse or harassment?

Upon hearing allegations, adults should not determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual abuse or sexual harassment. Instead, after ensuring the safety of the student, the adult should immediately report all allegations to appropriate child protection or law enforcement authorities. In some countries, this reporting is required by law.

Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Any adult to whom a Rotary youth program participant reports an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment must follow these reporting guidelines:

1. Receive the report.

- Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse or harassment. Be encouraging; do not express shock, horror, or disbelief.
- Assure privacy but not confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment in order to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others.
- Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person's motives. Remember that your responsibility is to present the story to the proper authorities.
- Be nonjudgmental and reassure. Avoid criticising anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It's especially important not to blame or criticise the young

person. Emphasise that the situation was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you.

- Document the allegation. Make a written record of the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to use the young person's words and record only what he or she told you.

2. Protect the young person.

Ensure the safety and well-being of the youth program participant by removing him or her from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the youth that this is being done for his or her safety and is not a punishment.

3. Report the allegations to appropriate authorities — child protection or law enforcement.

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment — first to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation and then to the club and district leadership for follow-through.

In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the Rotarian counsellor who is responsible for seeking the advice of appropriate agencies and interacting with them. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the district youth program chair or district governor should be the first Rotary contact.

Districts will cooperate with police or legal investigations.

4. Avoid gossip and blame.

Don't tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

5. Do not challenge the alleged offender.

Don't contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of noncriminal harassment, the district governor is responsible for follow-through and will contact the alleged offender after the young person has been moved to a safe environment. The district governor may designate this task to a district youth protection officer or district review committee.

Follow-through Procedures

Either the district youth programs chair or district youth protection officer must ensure that the following steps are taken immediately after an abuse allegation is reported.

1. Confirm that the youth program participant has been removed from the situation immediately and has no contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
2. If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the district youth protection officer or district review committee should coordinate an independent review of the allegations.
3. Ensure that the student receives immediate support services.
4. Offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counsellor to represent his or her interests. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with the youth program.
5. Contact the student's parents or legal guardian. If the student is away from home, the student and his or her parents should decide whether to stay in country or return home. If the student stays in country, written authorisation from the student's parents or legal guardian is required. If the student and the student's parents choose for the student to return home, consult with police before making travel arrangements. If an investigation is pending, the police may not approve of the student leaving the country.
6. Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with any other young participants in Rotary programs and activities while investigations are conducted.
7. Cooperate with the police or legal investigation.

8. Inform the district governor of the allegation. Either the district governor, district youth protection officer, or other district youth program chair must inform RI of the allegation within 72 hours and provide follow-up reports of steps taken and the status of investigations.
9. After the authorities have completed their investigation, the district must follow through to make sure the situation is being addressed. Specifically, Districts shall conduct an independent and thorough review of any allegations of sexual abuse or harassment.

Post allegation Report Considerations

Responding to the needs of the youth program participant

Districts shall adopt a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting a young person after an allegation report. The youth program participant is likely to feel embarrassed or confused and may become withdrawn.

After a report of harassment or abuse, students may have mixed feelings about remaining on their exchange. If they do choose to stay, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary club. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country but change to a different host club.

Although club members and host families may have trouble understanding how the student is feeling, the student would find it helpful to know that the club continues to be reassuring and supportive.

Club members and host families may feel ambivalent about their roles and unclear about their boundaries. However, they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

Addressing issues within the club

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of youth.

Club members should not speculate or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Rotarians must not become involved in investigations.

Making comments about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers violates both the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth and Rotary ideals.

Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to a slander or libel claim filed against Rotarians or clubs by the alleged abuser.