



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

District 6270

Youth Protection Policy

For all Youth Activities

Beginning with the 2006-2007 Rotary year, all clubs Youth Activities are required to be certified by D6270 as set forth herein.

Policy Framework

1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 6270 is 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.

2. Definitions

Volunteer: Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Activities who has direct interactions with students. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange officers and committee members, Rotarian counselors, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host students, host parents, and other adult residents of the host home (including adult siblings and other adult family members).

Student: Youth involved with Rotary Youth Activities, regardless of whether they are of the age of majority.

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse refers to engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student, or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts, alone or with another person of any age of the same sex or the opposite sex.

Additional examples of sexual abuse could include, but are not limited to:

- Non-touching offenses
- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a student to sexual or pornographic material

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or "groom" their victims.

Examples of sexual harassment could include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Displaying 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

3. Volunteer Selection and Screening

The following screening steps must be completed prior to participation in Youth Activities. (A sample of a *Youth Volunteer Affidavit* form can be found in *Appendix A.*)

District 6270 will maintain all records of criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors for ten years.

All volunteers interested in participating in the District Youth Activities program must:

- Complete a *Youth Volunteer Affidavit* form and authorize the district to conduct a criminal background check.
- Undergo personal interviews.
- Provide a list of references for the district to check.
- Meet RI and district 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 youth participants and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. 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 guidelines for the Youth Activities 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 exchange students. This should include:
 - > Demonstrated commitment to the safety and security of students
 - > Motivation for hosting a student is consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
 - > Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student
 - Aptitude for providing appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well being
- Host families must complete a written application, and authorize the district to conduct background checks on all residents in the household.
- Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include both announced and unannounced visits, both prior to 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 that reside in the home either on a full- or part-time basis.

Rotarian counselors must meet the criteria for *All Volunteers*, as well as the following:

- Counselors must not be a member of the student's host family.
- Counselors must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, which may include instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.
- Counselors should not be close friends to other volunteers involved with a particular student.

4. Student Selection and Screening

All students interested in participating in the District Youth Exchange programs must:

- Complete a written application and be interviewed for their suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program.
- Attend and participate in all district orientation and training sessions.

All parents or legal guardians of students interested in participating in the District Youth Exchange programs must:

- Be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program.

For all school year exchanges District 6270 is part of the Multi-district Central States Rotary Youth Exchange Program, Inc. We adhere to the policies established by its board for District 6270's program. Applications are generally accepted from August through October for an exchange the following year.

5. Training

District 6270 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Activities program participants. The youth exchange chair shall schedule the training sessions for those involved on the youth exchange committee

District 6270 will:

- Adapt the *Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual* to include relevant information on specific district guidelines, local customs, cultural issues, and legal requirements.
- Develop a calendar for training and define the frequency of training required for each volunteer position, including descriptions of who is to participate, when training should occur, and how training will be conducted.
- Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth Exchange program participants:
 - > District governor
 - > District Youth Exchange committee members
 - > Club Youth Exchange committee members
 - > Rotarian 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)
 - > Parents and legal guardians of students
- Establish guidelines to ensure that all those required to be trained have participated.
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance.

6. Allegation Reporting Guidelines

District 6270 is committed to protecting the safety and well being of Youth Activities students and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accord with the *Youth Activities Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines*, found in *Appendix B*. All means any incident that occurs, whether inside or outside of Rotary activities.

7. Investigation Guidelines

District 6270 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will investigate each allegation thoroughly. The district will cooperate with all law enforcement, child protective services, and legal investigations, and will only conduct its own independent investigations such that it does not interfere with other investigations.

A district level committee consisting of 3 past district governors, an assistant governor and a member of the youth exchange committee shall carry out internal investigations under this policy. The District Governor would be an ex-officio member.

8. Other District 6270 Responsibilities

District 6270 will

- Have procedures for reporting, investigating, and proper handling of non-criminal offenses or historic cases that law enforcement will not investigate.
- Be certain that each participating club provides each student with a list of local services in the district (rape and suicide crisis hotline, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, proper law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Will appoint an independent lawyer, therapist or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Will report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours, of the time the district becomes aware of the matter.
- Will report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, death) involving Youth Activities students to RI within 72 hours, from the time the district becomes aware of the matter.
- For Youth Exchange students send a report to Central States Responsible Officer.
- Evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures on a regular basis.
- Require monthly student reports from each inbound and outbound student.

9. Club Compliance

District 6270 will monitor and ensure that all participating clubs within the district 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:

- Copies of all materials produced in the club to promote and support the Youth Activities programs, including, but not limited to, promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
- List of services in area (rape and suicide crisis hotline, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, proper law enforcement agencies, community services, private services)
- Club abuse and harassment prevention training program

Participating clubs must agree to:

- Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating their program in accordance with District and RI policy.

- Conduct criminal background checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to adult full-time residents of host home, counselor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact. All volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Affidavit found in Appendix A.
- Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both prior to and during the placement.
 - Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
 - Follow the Youth Activities Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines found in Appendix B. Report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement authorities immediately and then to the club and district leadership for investigation.
 - Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the District 6270 Youth Exchange program structure (e.g. “backdoor exchanges”).
 - Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family (criteria for moving a student and back-up temporary housing available in advance).
 - Develop contingency plans for hosting that include pre-screened and 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 at least 2 preferably 3 host families.
 - Provide each student with a comprehensive local services list.
 - Ensure that the host counselor for each student is not a member of the student’s host family.
 - Ensure that the host counselor 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 sexual 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 to contact for assistance with any issues or problems to all Youth Exchange students. These people must include both males and females, not related to each other, and individuals independent of the host family and club counselor.
 - Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites and usage of the Rotary Marks
 - Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to the district immediately.
 - Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants’ parents or legal guardians.
 - Club Recertification requires each club to provide updated copies of all information for review and approval at the beginning of every Rotary year.

Please note that this policy is subject to change.

Adopted 12/7/05

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