



DISTRICT YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

DISTRICT 6450 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 6450 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

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

Volunteers include, 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.

Youth Protection Officer — A Rotarian, designated by the governor and elected to a three-year term who is responsible for ensuring that youth program participants are protected from abuse. The Youth Protection Officer will ensure that criminal background checks are being completed on an annual basis and that records are being kept for a minimum of 5 years. The Youth Protection Officer must ensure that Abuse and Harassment Prevention training is completed for all who participate in a Youth Program and that Club Compliance documentation is duly completed on an annual basis.

3. Liability Insurance

The 6450 district youth programs carry 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 supervision and control of all youth activities in the district, including those associated with Rotary Youth Exchange. District 6450 will monitor all participating clubs and ensure that they comply with youth protection and Rotary Youth Exchange certification requirements.

All clubs that participate in Youth Programs 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 6450 and RI policies.
- 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 program, including brochures, applications, policies, and websites.

5. Volunteer Selection and Screening

All Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers interested in working with youth program participants must meet RI and district 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.

All Youth Program participants (Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers), that have direct, unsupervised contact with program participants must:

- Complete a volunteer agreement form.
- Undergo a criminal background check (subject to local laws and practices).
- Be interviewed, in person by a committee member or designee.
 - Provide a list of 3 personal references with contact information (references cannot include family members and no more than one Rotarian).
- Comply with RI and district guidelines.

Note: Annual criminal background checks will be required for the Youth Protection Officer, the District Board Members, the Administrative Officer and any persons who will be responsible for maintaining confidential data, interviews and background checks.

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 and must be documented and filed with the Youth Exchange Chair and Responsible Officer.

Note: All adult residents (18 years of age or older) 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. Training

District 6450 and member clubs will provide youth-protection training.

A District Designee will conduct the training sessions for RYLA Volunteers.

Club Presidents will conduct the training sessions for InterAct and EarlyAct advisers and volunteers.

The District 6450 Youth Exchange program must provide youth-protection training. Specifically, District 6450 will train with the following objectives:

- Rotary's Youth Protection Guide reflecting district guidelines, Department of State Guidelines and Central State Rotary Youth Exchange Guidelines.
- Develop a training schedule that specifies those who will be trained, and how often.
- 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 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)
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance.

7. Allegation Handling and Follow-Through

District 6450 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will handle them in accordance with the Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

The district 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.

District 6450 will appoint a Youth Protection Officer or district review committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations regularly.

8. Travel by Youth

Youth travel outside of the local community must comply with youth protection policies.

For all youth travel sponsored by District 6450 or its clubs, the following will be done before departure:

- Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians of program participants.
- Youth Exchange Travel must have documented District Chair approval prior to departure and must comply with Department of State Guidelines.
- 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.

9. District 6450 Youth Exchange Administration

The District 6450 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. District 6450 requires:
 - Store participant and volunteer records in the Central States Rotary Youth Exchange Database (Youth Exchange Administrative Hub AKA: YEAH System).
 - 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.
- 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 the Youth Protection Officer, Responsible Officer for CSRYE, District Governor, and 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.
 - Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
 - Request a monthly WELL-BEING Report from each inbound and outbound program participant. This may include information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange chair will 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



ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES

DISTRICT 6450 ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES

District 6450 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines.

The safety and well-being of program participants must always be top priority.

DEFINITIONS

Emotional or verbal abuse — The use of fear, humiliation, or verbal assaults to control the behavior of another. Examples include rejecting the person, preventing him or her from developing normal social relationships, and making derogatory statements about his or her race, religion, ability, intellect, tastes, or personal appearance.

Physical abuse — Physical contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or harm.

Neglect — Failure to provide the food, shelter, or medical care that is necessary to well-being.

Sexual abuse — Engaging in or arranging implicit or explicit sexual acts, whether they are performed alone or with another person of any age or gender, through force or coercion or with anyone who is unable to give consent. Any sexual activity between a legal adult and a minor is considered sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can also include nontouching offenses, such as voyeuristic behavior, indecent exposure, or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

Sexual harassment — Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted or directed at someone unwilling or unable to provide consent. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims. Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets or jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, gossip about one's sex life, and comments about a person's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
 - Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
 - Display of sexually suggestive objects or images
 - Sexual leering or whistling
 - Inappropriate physical contact, such as brushing against a person
 - Obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

RECEIVING AN ALLEGATION REPORT

From the Victim

Any adult to whom a program participant reports abuse or harassment must:

Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes courage to report abuse or harassment. Be encouraging, but remain neutral; do not express shock, horror, or disbelief.

Assure privacy but not confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse or harassment 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 report this information to the proper authorities.

Be nonjudgmental and reassure. Avoid criticizing anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It's especially important not to blame or criticize the young person. Emphasize that it was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you.

Document the allegation. Record the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to record the young person's exact words.

From a third-party

Any adult to whom a report of abuse is submitted, must, in turn, provide the report to the Youth Protection Officer for an investigation. The Youth Protection Officer is then to open an investigation following the procedure mentioned above with regards to fact-finding details and to assure privacy but not confidentiality.

ALLEGATION RESPONSE

The following steps must be taken immediately after alleged abuse or harassment is reported. Some of them may be performed by any program volunteer, while others should be performed by a district officer, as specified.

1. Protect the young person.

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

Take immediate action to ensure the young person's health and well-being, and get him or her medical or psychological care, if necessary.

2. Report the allegations to appropriate authorities.

Immediately report all cases of abuse or harassment — first to the Youth Protection Officer for investigation and then to the Program Coordinator/Chair and the District Governor. Interrogations related to allegations of abuse or harassment must be left entirely to law enforcement agencies.

In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the District Youth Protection Officer, who is responsible for seeking advice from and interacting with appropriate agencies. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the district governor should be the second Rotary contact.

District 6450 will cooperate with police or legal investigations.

District 6450 has researched local, state, and national laws related to youth protection, including reporting allegations, and notes the following legal requirements of which all volunteers must be aware:

- My Rotary – Learning Center course on Preventing and Addressing Harassment:
<https://learn.rotary.org/members/learn/course/internal/view/elearning/575/preventing-and-addressing-harassment>
- DCFS mandated reporting guidelines:
<https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/safekids/reporting/Pages/index.aspx>
- DCFS training:
<https://mr.dcfstraining.org/UserAuth/Login!loginPage.action;jsessionid=98D8DDACEE7EC4D1577D2ABD1EA7A73C>

3. Avoid gossip and blame.

Don't tell anyone about the allegation other than those who need to know. Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

4. Follow through.

A district officer must inform RI of the allegation within 72 hours and provide ongoing status reports.

District 6450 will ensure that the program participant's parents or legal guardians have been notified and offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent his or her interests.

If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, or if the investigation is inconclusive, the district governor will appoint a district review committee to coordinate an independent review to ensure that district youth protection policies were followed, confirm that youth safety was the highest priority, and determine any necessary modifications to district procedures. This review is not responsible for determining the validity of any allegations; that can only be done by youth protection agency personnel or trained law enforcement professionals.

If law enforcement has found the allegations to be noncriminal, the district governor is responsible for contacting the alleged offender. The district governor may delegate this task to a district youth protection officer or district review committee.

District 6450 will document all accusations of inappropriate behavior and the actions taken to resolve the situation, so that patterns of inappropriate behavior are identified and addressed.