2.120. Youth Protection

2.120.1. 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' partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come in contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. *(October 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 58)*

Source: November 2002 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 98
Amended by November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 72; October 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 58

2.120.2. Abuse and Harassment Prevention and Reporting Procedure

To uphold the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth all clubs and districts must ensure the abuse and harassment prevention and reporting requirements are followed as established by the general secretary:

1. RI has a zero-tolerance policy against abuse and harassment.
2. All district governors-elect must complete youth protection training before the start of their term as governor, as determined by the general secretary.
3. Districts participating in any youth programs may develop and implement youth protection policies according to local customs. Districts participating in Rotary Youth Exchange must develop and implement youth protection policies as outlined in *Rotary Code of Policies* section 41.050. Rotary Youth Exchange.
4. Districts participating in any youth program should appoint a youth protection officer. The youth protection officer should advise clubs and the district related to abuse and harassment prevention, assist districts to manage risks and crises that impact the safety of youth, should have professional experience in

counseling, social work, law, law enforcement, or child development, and may be a Rotarian or non-Rotarian.

5. All allegations of abuse or harassment shall be reported to RI within 72 hours of learning of the incident. Failure to report incidents to RI within 72 hours may result in suspension of the district's Youth Exchange certification. Where there is sufficient evidence that an individual, club, or district knowingly failed to report as required, the general secretary may determine whether and/or the extent to which involved parties may continue to be eligible to participate in Rotary's youth programs, or whether additional sanctions may be necessary, including but not limited to requiring the club to terminate an individual's membership.

6. Any allegation of abuse must be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency, in accordance with RI's zero-tolerance policy. All law enforcement reviews must be conducted by legal authorities that are not affiliated with Rotary.

7. In addition to reporting to law enforcement for investigation, an independent and thorough investigation must be made by the club and district into any claims of abuse or harassment including a determination for how to prevent a similar situation in the future.

8. Any person involved in Rotary against whom an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment is made must be removed from all contact with youth until the matter is resolved.

9. A club must terminate the membership of any individual who admits to, is convicted of or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment of youth or youth program participants. A Rotarian or non-Rotary volunteer who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or sexual harassment or other act of moral turpitude must be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. A club may not grant membership to a person who is known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment. (Upon obtaining information that a club has knowingly failed to terminate the membership of such an individual, the RI Board may terminate the club for failure to comply).

10. If an investigation into a claim of sexual abuse or harassment 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. If there are subsequent claims of sexual abuse or harassment, the individual shall be permanently prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt, the continued presence of the adult could be detrimental to the reputation of the organization and could be harmful to youth. A person who is accused but 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 any individual will be reinstated to a former position.

11. Districts must track all individuals prohibited from contact with youth and ensure such prohibitions are implemented consistently throughout the district from year to year.

12. Individuals prohibited from working with youth 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 where there may be contact with youth.

(January 2020 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 85)

Source: November 2004 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 108; September 2016 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 57
Amended by November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 72; October 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 58; January 2020 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 85

2.120.3. Travel and Overnight Stays by Youth

Recognizing that Rotary clubs and districts are encouraged to undertake activities that develop youth, club and district programs or activities that involve minors undertaking travel outside their local community, or that include overnight stays, must develop, maintain, and comply with youth protection policies and written procedures. With the exception of travel and tours operated by or on behalf of host districts, Youth Exchange travel is subject to the policies outlined in *Rotary Code of Policies* section 41.050. *Youth Exchange.*

The governor has the responsibility for the supervision and control of all programs and activities organized within the district that involve minors traveling outside their local community or involve overnight stays.

Clubs and districts:

1. shall obtain written permission from the parents or guardians of all youth participants for travel outside the local community or involve overnight stays in advance;

2. shall provide parents or legal guardians with specific details about the program, location of event, travel itineraries, sleeping accommodations, and contact information for program organizers before departure;

3. should, when traveling 150 miles away from home residence or out of home country, require the parents or legal guardians of each minor to provide travel insurance for the minor, which includes such coverages as medical (when traveling outside home country), emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, and legal liability, in amounts satisfactory to the club or district organizing the activity or event, with coverage from the time of the minor's departure from home until the return home.

(October 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 58)

Source: January 2009 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 155; June 2010 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 210;
Amended by June 2013 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 196; September 2016 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 57; October 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 58

2.120.4. Club and District Requirements

Club and district policies and procedures should include.

1. volunteer application and screening procedures;
2. outlines of volunteer job descriptions and responsibilities;
3. supervision standards for ratio of adults to minors
4. crisis management plan including:
    a. handling medical and other emergencies and providing for adult support;
    b. procedures for communicating with parents and legal guardians;
5. written guidelines for reporting and follow-through on allegations or incidents consistent with RI policy.

(October 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 58)

Source: January 2009 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 155

Cross-References

41.050. Rotary Youth Exchange