



YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Rotary Youth Exchange

(RYE)

Adopted: March 2017
Revised: February 2022

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

1. Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth

District 5190 Rotary Youth Exchange Program (RYE) 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, 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 — Any student who participates in a Rotary Youth Exchange program, whether they are age 17 or younger, or age 18 or older.

3. Incorporation and Liability Insurance

The District 5190 RYE program is a legal entity known as "Rotary Youth Exchange D5190". This entity has been formed under the laws of the state of Nevada on May 13, 2011, and is valid at this time.

The District 5190 RYE program carries 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 5190 will monitor all

participating clubs and ensure that they comply with youth protection and Rotary Youth Exchange certification requirements.

All clubs that participate in Rotary Youth Exchange 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 5190 and RI policies
- Confirmation that volunteers will be prohibited from one on one 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 by the District RYE Program.
- Confirmation that a potential host family may not host a student unless the family is approved for hosting by the District RYE Program.
- All club materials that advertise the Youth Exchange program, including brochures, applications, policies, and websites
- List of services in the area (rape and suicide hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Any club youth-protection training materials

5. Volunteer Selection and Screening

All Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers interested in working with RYE participants must meet RI and District 5190 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 an RYE volunteer. Reinstatement is not a right, and reinstatement to his or her former position is not guaranteed.

All Youth Exchange Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers that have direct, unsupervised contact with RYE program participants must:

- Complete a volunteer application/agreement form
- Undergo a criminal background check following the policy in section 10.
- Be interviewed, preferably in person
- Provide a list of personal references with contact information. References may not be a family member, and only one Rotarian, who is not an RYE volunteer, may serve as a reference.
- Comply with RI and District 5190 guidelines for the Youth Exchange program

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 host family application form
- Undergo home visits with and without notice, both before and during the placement; home visits must be conducted at least annually, even for repeat host families

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, both inbound and outbound, 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 5190 Youth Exchange program must meet district guidelines and:

- Complete an 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

The District 5190 Youth Exchange program must provide youth protection training and information to all students and volunteers. Approved District RYE Committee members, or club Youth Exchange Officers who have been approved by the District RYE Chair will conduct the training sessions. Specifically, District 5190 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 how
- 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

8. Travel by RYE Students

For the travel of Youth Exchange students outside their host communities, either with their host families or to attend Rotary events, District 5190 shall obtain written permission from the students’ parents or legal guardians. In addition, the travel must follow the Rotary Youth Exchange District 5190 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 5190 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

9. District 5190 Youth Exchange Administration

The District 5190 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 5190 requires that all program participants be covered by an insurance policy that is approved by RI, and is listed in the *Youth Exchange Officers Directory*, which is published by the RI Youth Exchange Office.
- 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.

10. District 5190 Criminal Background Check Policy

This Criminal Background Check Policy is governed by the laws and regulations of the United States, the states of California and Nevada, and the regulations of the United States Department of State, and of Rotary International. All background checks will be conducted under the regulations of the U.S. Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

Accuracy of Application and Authorization Form - Providing false information on the application, including driver license number, address, date of birth, etc., is grounds for automatic exclusion from participation in the District RYE program, regardless of the results of the criminal background check.

Indemnification of District - The District has no control over the information received from the reporting agencies. We cannot be liable to any person or entity for the information provided by any agency to the District or any of its agents, or for any actions taken by the District in reliance on such information. In order to assure the safety of exchange students, the District is entitled to and shall rely upon the information contained in the criminal history report until such time as a corrected criminal history transcript has been provided.

Decision Process - Upon receipt of the background check information personal references, and other information available, the District RYE Committee Chair is responsible for the decision as to who can serve as a volunteer or a host. Any disqualification should be discussed with the District Governor before the individual is notified. The volunteer must be notified before and after any potential adverse action is taken. The volunteer will be provided with his/her rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act and a copy of the background check.

Disqualification from Volunteer/Host Participation - The following rules shall apply if the District 5190 RYE Committee learns (via a criminal background search, personal reference, or otherwise) that a prospective volunteer or host family member has been convicted of, has pled guilty to, has deferred adjudication for, or has pled no contest to one of the following crimes under the laws of any State within the United States, the United States, or any other nation:

Automatic Disqualification:

- Crimes against children
- Felony offenses against persons
- Felony offenses against the family (domestic violence)
- Crime defined as public indecency
- Crimes using weapons
- Arson
- Any violent crime or felony drug related offence other than those identified below
- Residing on the same premises as a Registered Sex Offender

Possible Disqualification:

The decision whether to allow participation shall be within the exclusive and absolute control of the District 5190 RYE Committee Chairperson. for first offense DWI, DUI, or possession of a controlled substance under two ounces, and crimes against property (theft, fraud, embezzlement, forgery, etc.), The date of disposition, severity, and final disposition will be the determining factors.

For all other criminal offenses (except traffic violations classified as misdemeanors), the district will review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis.

If a person is charged with any criminal offense, other than traffic violations classified as a misdemeanor, involvement with the District's youth programs as a volunteer or host will be temporarily suspended pending disposition of the case

Challenging the Accuracy of the Criminal Background Record - Any individual who disputes or desires to contest information provided by any agency must provide a written notice to the District RYE Committee Chairperson within ten days of being advised that her or his application for participation has been denied. It is the individual's responsibility to challenge the report received from the agency and to arrange for any corrections, if necessary.

Confidentiality - The district RYE Committee will maintain the confidentiality of all criminal background search information, including information regarding disqualification decisions. Such records will be maintained in files that are exclusively devoted to the individual and are not co-mingled with any student or any other host family.

Frequency of Background Checks - Checks will be done for volunteers and host family members annually.

Background Checks Conducted for Other Organizations – Background checks conducted for other Rotary District 5190 programs, or organizations other than District 5190 Rotary Youth Exchange cannot be accepted.