

# ROTARY DISTRICT 9520 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

*District 9520 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 other volunteers to safe-guard 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.*

This policy applies to young people entrusted to our care whilst participating in Rotary organised youth programs. These young people are protected in accordance with Rotary International requirements, South Australian Legislation, and Rotary Insurers' requirements. Any Victorian or New South Wales requirements which are additional to or more stringent than the requirements in this policy are listed in the Appendix. These additional requirements are to be adhered to as applicable by Rotarians and those assisting Rotarians.

## Glossary

Child	A person under the age legislated as the age of consent in the state where they reside (SA 17, NSW 16 and Vic 16).
RI	Rotary International
RYE	Rotary Youth Exchange
RYP	Rotary Youth Program
Volunteer	An adult involved in Rotary Youth Programs who has direct interaction either supervised or unsupervised with young people
Youth/Student	Any individual who is participating in a Rotary Youth Program regardless of whether or not he or she is of legal age of majority. Also referred to in this document as young people, children, child, youth, student or young person.

## General Requirements

All Rotarians will bear in mind paedophiles often appear as respectable, conscientious, hardworking Rotarians.

- For insurance purposes, it is a requirement that all Rotary Club Presidents and Rotary Youth Program Chairs will, prior to the commencement of the Rotary year, complete, sign and send to the District Insurance Officer "The Club & District Youth Committee Compliance Declaration Form.
- All Rotary clubs will have a Protection Officer (Officers) whose duties involve managing the club insurance, risk management and the monitoring of the club's compliance with youth protection procedures. The officer's duties also involve completing the required forms pertaining to these matters. (For RYE – CL 7, CL 7 ST)
- The suitability of all volunteers assisting in RYPs will be carefully assessed in accordance with their roles.
  - Those volunteers who may be alone with a young person for a period of time, such time that might allow grooming and abuse to occur are defined as-**REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS** and will
    - sign an application/declaration form CL 4 or YP 7, (Badged Form 3 in new national requirements to be rolled out)
    - be thoroughly interviewed
    - have three carefully conducted referee checks
    - have a DCSI check or the Victorian or New South Wales equivalent
    - have their performance monitored

All other volunteers assisting young people involved in a RYP (**RESPONSIBLE ADULTS**) will be carefully assessed in the same way a responsible parent would assess a person looking after their son or daughter in a similar situation when of a similar age.

- It is a state requirement that any Rotarian responsible for storing documents which contain people's personal information, e.g. medical records, even though they may not have direct contact alone with young people be assessed as a "Registered Volunteer".
- It is a RI requirement that the chairs of all Youth Committees even though they may not have direct contact alone with young people are assessed as "Registered Volunteers".
- It is mandatory that during the Rotary year the various people involved in RYPs who are required to complete and submit compliance forms as set down in the respective program's manual, do so.
- A copy of all forms must be emailed to the District 9520 Protection Officer in addition to being sent to the recipient listed on the form.
- Forms must be securely stored for the period stated on the bottom of the form and only shown to those people who need to see them.
- This policy and all youth program manuals are to be updated annually or more frequently if needed. These updates will be done by the District Protection Committee in consultation with the appropriate youth committees. All revised versions are to be placed on the District 9520 website
- Mandatory Reporting – Should a Rotarian know or have a strong suspicion a child has been abused, seriously mistreated or neglected, it is their legal obligation to notify the child protection authority in the state in which the crime is occurring.

## **Requirements Relating to Young People**

**In too many past instances young people who have been abused in a Rotary Youth Program have not spoken out thinking they will not be believed, they will be blamed and nothing will be done. This often ruins their lives and allows the perpetrator to go free.**

- We will do our utmost to give young people in RYPs the confidence to seek our help knowing should they have a problem big or small we will
  - listen sympathetically
  - respond promptly, effectively and with compassion.
- Young people at or before the commencement of any RYP in which they will participate will be briefed on the requirements, scope and rules relating to that program.
- Young people in RYPs will be briefed on and given a list of responsible people and organisations in and outside Rotary they can approach if they have a serious problem, e.g. sexual abuse.
- We will stress they are free to approach the responsible person they feel most comfortable talking to.
- A condition of joining or remaining in a RYP is that all participants agree to and do follow the rules and instructions relating to that program.
- Throughout their involvement with Rotary either at club or district level, a young person in any RYP will be told of the best people, some of the same sex as themselves, who they can approach for any information, help or advice.

- Young people in a RYP will be given the opportunity to offer comments about the program and those running it. At the conclusion of all programs a debriefing will occur to gain comment from the participants. All comments will be seriously considered.

### **Requirements Relating to Allegations of Abuse**

**Young people who have been abused are mentally traumatised and find it very difficult to talk of their experience. If they are to make a full disclosure, it is critical those they may approach treat them with care and compassion.**

- Adults who it is likely a young person may contact if abused will be briefed and given the RI list of common sense responses to follow should this happen.
- These are the follow-up actions required of the adult the young person has approached and the order they are to be done
  - Ensure the safety of the young person
  - Persuade them to go promptly (so forensic evidence if available is not lost) with them to the police
  - Notify the District Protection Officer or the District Governor
  - Ensure RI through Parramatta is advised of the allegation within 72 hours

#### **Do Not**

- Contact the accused
- Do not talk about or tell others
- In all matters where the police are involved, Rotary will leave the investigation to them
- Where the police do not want to investigate, the Rotary Protection Committee will conduct a thorough investigation using experts outside Rotary as necessary.
- All Rotarians and those assisting in RYPs are to be aware of behavioural and mood changes among our young people. Such changes can be the result of sexual abuse. If such changes are observed we will tactfully and compassionately try to get to the bottom of the problem calling on outside professional assistance if needed.

### **Requirements Specific to Youth Exchange**

**Youth Exchange Students are to be admired. They at an early age have shown the courage to leave their family and friends and come here or go to a strange country where they know no one, are surrounded by a new culture and in some instances the language is different. They deserve our help and understanding.**

- RYE is a Rotary Club program guided and assisted by the District Youth Exchange Committee.
- All Rotary Clubs wishing to be involved in either sponsoring or hosting an exchange student need to apply to the District Youth Exchange Committee for certification to do so by submitting CL 5, CL 6, or CL 5/6 ST forms declaring they will abide by the requirements.
- The District Youth Exchange Committee is required to ensure all parties involved in incoming and outgoing exchanges attend and receive comprehensive training, i.e. the inbound and outbound students, the inbound and outbound club counsellors, and all natural and host families.

- All RYE students will be given an inbound and outbound counsellor to assist and guide them.
- The club youth exchange counsellor is the most critical person in ensuring a successful exchange. The best person available should always be carefully selected.
- The club counsellor or a person working alongside the club counsellor with the student must be of the same sex as the student.
- The club counsellor must not be a host family member.
- All young people in RYE will be given and briefed on a list of simple, common sense actions they can take to keep themselves safe.
- It is important the counsellors and the student are in regular communication before and during their time away or time hosted here.
- In order for an exchange to run smoothly specific rules have been designed for the programs. It is very important these rules are followed by all involved.
- RYE students have regular reports they are to complete for both their host and sponsoring countries. It is important counsellors ensure this is done.
- The District Youth Exchange Committee is required by RI to have a dedicated mobile phone available 24 hours a day for emergency student contact.
- All inbound long term RYE students are required to wear a Medic Alert bracelet or pendant so, in an emergency, they can be immediately identified and any medical problem they may have revealed.
- The District Youth Exchange Committee is to ensure all RYE students have travel insurance in accordance with RCOP 46.060.10 before they leave their country of origin.

**For More information refer to the following resources:**

- Rotary International – soon to be released Rotary Youth Protection Guide
- Rotary National Insurance Committee
- Aon Risk Solutions
- Rotary District 9520 Guide to Protecting Youth Involved in Short Rotary Programs and the Elderly and Infirm When Being Assisted by Rotary
- Rotary District 9520 District Certification – Policy, Procedures and Supporting Documentation for Protecting Youth Exchange Students
- Rotary District 9520 Club Certification – Policy, Procedures and Supporting Documentation for Protecting Youth Exchange Students
- Rotary District 9520 Youth Exchange Program Outbound Student Manual
- Rotary District 9520 Youth Exchange Program Manual for Long Term Inbound Students

## **APPENDIX**

### **Additional Requirements Relating to New South Wales**

- The act requires anyone who has physical contact or face to face contact with children to have a New South Wales Working with Children Check clearance. As a result Rotary District 9520 rules all our volunteers classified as **RESPONSIBLE ADULTS** looking after young people in our RYPs who live or go to school in New South Wales will, in addition to
  1. receiving assessment as a **RESPONSIBLE ADULT**
  2. be required to have a NSW Working with Children Check clearance.

### **Additional Requirements Relating to Victoria**

- The act requires anyone who has **UNSUPERVISED** physical or face to face contact with children to have a Victorian Working with Children Card. As a result District 9520 rules all volunteers looking after young people in our RYPs who live or go to school in Victoria and who
  1. are classified as **RESPONSIBLE ADULTS**
  2. might be looking after our students without another responsible volunteer presentwill in addition to
  1. receiving assessment as a **RESPONSIBLE ADULT**
  2. be required to have a Victorian Working with Children Card

## **Document Control**

Title	Rotary District 9520 Youth Protection Policy
Version Number	1.2
Owner	District 9520 Protection Committee
Approver	District 9520 Protection Committee
Date Approved	31 March 2017
Review date	31 March 2018