

Rotary District 7815

Youth Protection Policy

1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 7815 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

Youth - Minors and young people who participate in Rotary sanctioned activities, regardless of whether they are of legal age of majority.

Club – In this policy, “club” means either or both a Rotary Club and a Rotaract Club.

Volunteer - Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Program activities who has direct interactions, either supervised or unsupervised, with students. Volunteers include, among others:

- Club and district Youth Service officers and district and club level committee members; Rotarian counselors;
- Rotarians, Rotaractors and non-Rotarians and their spouses and partners who host students for activities or outings or who might drive students to events or functions; and host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including siblings and other family members.

Prohibited Person – Anyone who:

- Has been convicted of an offence which resulted in harm to a minor, including assault, sexual assault, sexual interference or failure to provide the necessities of life;
- Has been convicted of an offence not involving a minor which, in the opinion of the District Youth Safety Coordinator, suggests an unacceptable risk of harm to a minor in the care of that person; or
- Is subject to a court order or decree prohibiting the person from being in contact with a minor.

Our increasing knowledge about the needs of children and the effects of their social environment on their growth and development is changing what is viewed as child abuse. Some practices that were considered acceptable are now generally believed to be abusive. The following are the main kinds of abuse:

Physical abuse – Mistreatment of a young person by use of physical contact intended to cause pain, injury or other physical suffering or harm. It may be a single incident, a series or pattern of incidents. The Criminal Code states that physical force cannot be used on children unless the force used is “reasonable” and has been used for “corrective purposes” by a parent or someone acting in the role of a parent.

Emotional or verbal abuse – May take the form of chronic exposure to alcohol or drug abuse, verbal attacks on a child’s sense of self, repeated humiliation or rejection. Exposure to violence or severe conflict in the home, forced isolation, restraint or causing a child to be

afraid much of the time may also cause emotional harm. Emotional abuse rarely happens only once and it is usually part of a particular way of relating to children.

Neglect – Is any lack of care that may cause harm to a child’s development or endangers the child in any way. Physical neglect is the failure to meet a child’s physical need. This includes failing to provide adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, healthcare and protection from harm. Emotional neglect is the failure to meet a child’s need for affection and sense of belonging.

Sexual abuse - Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite sex. This includes non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material. Sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offense.

Sexual harassment - 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 used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims.

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one’s sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of 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. Incorporation of District 7815 and Liability Insurance

District 7815 is incorporated under the Federal *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* as Rotary District 7815 Incorporated. Its Corporation Number is 436387-6.

District 7815 carries General Liability insurance in the amount of \$ 10,000 that is renewed annually in July.

4. Volunteer Selection and Screening

District 7815 will maintain in perpetuity all records of criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors.

All volunteers interested in participating in the District 7815 Youth Service Programs must meet the following requirements:

- Complete the District 7815 Volunteer Assessment form and authorize the district to conduct a Vulnerable Sector or criminal background check (subject to local laws and practices).
- Undergo personal interviews.
- Provide a list of references for the district to check.
- Understand and comply with RI and district guidelines for the Youth Service programs.

District 7815 will not permit a prohibited person to participate in any child-related program.

- If an individual is accused of sexual abuse or harassment and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, additional safeguards must be put in place to ensure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact as well as for the protection of the accused. 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.

Youth Exchange 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. Host families must demonstrate:
 - Commitment to the safety and security of students
 - Motivation for hosting a student 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
- Host families must complete a written application.
- Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include announced and unannounced visits, both before 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 (over the age of 18) of the host family and other members of the extended family who are permanent or part-time residents in the home.

Youth Exchange 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 that may arise during the exchange, including instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.
- District 7815 will endeavor to avoid selecting counselors who are close friends or relatives of other volunteers involved with a particular student (e.g., school principal who is also a club member, host family).

5. Youth Exchange Student Selection and Screening

All students interested in participating in the District 7815 Youth Exchange program must meet these requirements

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

All parents or legal guardians of students interested in participating in the District 7815 Youth Exchange program must be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the program.

6. Training

District 7815 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Service program participants. The Rotary District 7815 Youth Service Committee will conduct the training sessions.

Specifically, District 7815 will:

- Adapt the *Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leader's Guide* to incorporate specific district guidelines, information on local customs and cultural

- issues, and legal requirements
- Develop a training calendar that defines the participants, frequency of training required for each volunteer position, and training methods to be used
- Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth Service program participants:
 - District governor
 - District Youth Service committee members
 - Club Youth Service committee members
 - Youth Exchange Rotarian counselors
 - Other Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth Service activities, such as local tours or district events
 - Youth Exchange host families
 - Youth Exchange Students (outbound and inbound)
 - Parents and legal guardians of Youth Exchange students
- Establish guidelines to ensure that all participants have received the requisite training
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance

7. Allegation Reporting Guidelines

District 7815 is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of Youth Service program students and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accordance with the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

8. Follow-through and Review Guidelines

District 7815 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will ensure that each allegation is investigated thoroughly. The district will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with other investigations when conducting its own independent reviews.

9. Other District 7815 Youth Exchange Responsibilities

- Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and handling noncriminal offenses or historical cases that law enforcement chooses not to investigate.
- Ensure that all inbound Youth Exchange students maintain insurance from the time of their departure from home to their return home at the following minimum levels:
 - \$1,000,000 medical expense coverage;
 - \$10,000 accidental death or dismemberment, and
 - Not less than \$10,000 for repatriation of remains.
- Provide each student with a list of local services in the district (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.).
- Complete a student data request form for all participating Youth Exchange students and return it to RI one month before the exchange begins.
- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to Youth Exchange students.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Appoint an independent lawyer, therapist, or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours.
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI within 72 hours.
- Evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures regularly.
- Require a monthly report from each inbound and outbound student in the district that

includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange chair can then review the reports and assist students as needed.

10. Youth Exchange Club Compliance

District 7815 will monitor all participating clubs within the district and ensure that they 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:

- All materials produced in the club to promote and support the Youth Exchange program, including promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
- List of services in the area (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Club abuse and harassment prevention training program materials

Participating clubs must agree to carry out the following:

- Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with District 7815 and RI policies.
- If not coordinated by the district, conduct vulnerable sector or criminal background checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to, adult residents of host home, counselor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact with youth. All volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Affidavit.
- Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both before and during the placement.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
- Follow the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines.
- Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the District 7815 Youth Exchange program structure (so-called backdoor exchanges).
- Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family, including establishing criteria for moving a student and locating available back-up temporary housing in advance.
- Develop contingency hosting plans that include prescreened, 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 multiple host families.
- Provide each student with a comprehensive local services list, including information for dentists, doctors, places of worship, counselors, suicide and rape crisis hotlines, etc.
- 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 students with a list of individuals to contact in the case of a problem or emergency. This list will include the name and contact information for the student's

Rotarian counselor, host club president, host district chair, host governor, sending district chair, sending governor, and sending club president. This list will also include local resources for medical, dental and mental health care and law enforcement professionals. Where available, this list will also include local resources, suicide prevention hotlines, rape crisis hotlines, and local child protection agencies.

- Provide the names and contact information of at least three people — both males and females who are not related to each other and do not have close ties to the host families or club counselor — who can help the students with any issues or problems.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, deaths) involving Youth Exchange students to the district immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.
- Make every effort to place students in three successive host families on long-term exchanges.
- Prohibit volunteers from having contact with students until a background check has been conducted and clearance for unsupervised contact with students has been issued.

11. Allegation Reporting Guidelines

For use by all adults to whom a student reports an incident of abuse or harassment

Upon hearing any allegations of abuse or harassment, adults should not determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes abuse or harassment. Instead, after ensuring the safety of the student, the adults should immediately report all allegations to the appropriate child protection or law enforcement authorities.

Any adult to whom a student reports an incident of sexual abuse or harassment is responsible for following these ***Allegation Reporting Guidelines***.

1) ***Receive the Report***

- a) **Listen attentively and stay calm.** Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse. It is appropriate to listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.
- b) **Assure privacy but not confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment to make it stop and to ensure that it doesn't happen to other students.
- c) **Get the facts, but don't interrogate.** Ask the student questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the student that she/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking 'why' questions. Remember your responsibility is to present the student's story to the proper authorities. (Refer to Appendix A: *Examples of Non-Leading Interview Techniques*)
- d) **Be non-judgmental and reassure the student.** Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the student. Assure the student that the situation was not their fault and that they were brave and mature to come to you.
- e) **Record.** Keep a written record of the conversation with the student as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the student's words, and record only what has been told to you.

2) ***Protect the Young Person***

Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student. Remove the student from the situation immediately and all contact with alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the student that this is

for his or her own safety and is not a punishment.

3) Report to Appropriate Child Protection or Law Enforcement Authorities

- a) Immediately report all cases of abuse or harassment – first to the authorities for investigation and then to the club and district leadership for follow through.

If the child is in **immediate danger**, call 911 or your local police, otherwise:

New Brunswick

1-800-992-2873 or 1-800-442-9799 for After Hours Emergencies Services.

Newfoundland & Labrador

1-833-552-2368

Nova Scotia

1-877-424-1177. You can report suspected child maltreatment after regular business hours at 1-866-922-2434.

Prince Edward Island

During Business Hours 1-877-341-3101

After Business Hours 1-800-341-6868

Social workers will receive intakes, carry out assessments, make initial decisions on providing telephone crisis counselling, refer people to the appropriate regional office and/or arrange for financial assistance for special items.

- b) If the authorities wish to interview the student or arrange for a forensic medical examination, accompany the student.
- c) As soon as possible advise the student's Club counselor of the accusation unless the counselor is involved in the accusation; then contact the District Protection Officer or a member of the District Protection Committee.
- d) The student's Club counselor if advised of an allegation should advise the District Protection Officer or a member of the District Protection Committee.

4) Avoid gossip and blame.

Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

5) Do not challenge the alleged offender.

The adult to whom the student reports must not contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the District Protection Officer or Committee and District Governor are responsible for investigating, with the assistance of the District Youth Exchange chair and the Club counselor as needed, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.

6) Follow-up

After reporting allegations to the Rotarian or District Youth Service Chair, follow up to make sure steps are being taken to address the situation.

7) Post Report Procedures

Either the District Youth Programs Chair, the District Protection Officer or member of the

committee must ensure that the following steps are taken following an abuse allegation report. Unless otherwise specified, these steps must be taken immediately following the report.

- a) Confirm that the student has been removed from the situation immediately and all contact with alleged abuser or harasser.
- b) Contact the authorities immediately (if not already done). If law enforcement agency **will not** investigate, the District Protection Officer or Committee with the assistance of the Club should contact the nearest office of the Department of Social Development listed below to coordinate an independent investigation into the allegations.
- c) Ensure the student receives immediate support services.
- d) Offer the student an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent the interests of the student. Ask social services or the police to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with a Youth Service program.
- e) Contact student's parents. If away from home, provide student with the option of either staying in the country or returning home. If the student stays in the country, written authorization from the student's parents or legal guardian is required. If the student and the student's parents chose for the student to return home, with the authorities before making travel arrangements. If an investigation is pending, the authorities may not approve of the student leaving the country.
- f) Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with specific student and other youth while investigations are conducted.
- g) Cooperate with police or legal investigation.
- h) A responsible Rotarian should inform the District Protection Officer or Committee member. The District Protection Officer or committee must then inform the District Youth Service Chair and District Governor of the allegation. Either the District Governor or the District Protection Officer must inform Rotary International of the allegation. This **must be done within 72 hours**. Provide follow-up reports of steps taken and the outcome of all investigations and resulting actions.
- i) After the authorities have completed their investigation, the district must follow through to make sure the situation is being addressed. Specifically, District 7815 will conduct an independent and thorough review of any allegations of abuse or harassment.

8) Post Allegation Report Guidelines

Responding to the needs of the youth program participant:

District 7815 will adopt a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting a young person after an allegation report.

The student is likely to feel embarrassed, confused, and may become withdrawn and appear to be avoiding members of the host family or Club. After a report of harassment or abuse, students may or may not want to remain on their exchange. If they do choose to stay, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary Club depending on the circumstances. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in the country, but change to a different host Club.

It may be difficult for Club members and volunteers to understand how the student is feeling, but it would be helpful for the student to know that the Club remains a support for them. Club members and host families may experience ambiguity toward their roles and may feel unclear regarding their boundaries. However they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

Appropriate response for addressing issues within the Rotary Club for allegations made against Rotarians or non-Rotarian volunteers

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of the youth. Club members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer

personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Club members should be cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matter during the investigations. Rotarians must not become involved in investigations. Making comments made about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers violates both the *Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth* and Rotary ideals. Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to a slander or libel claim filed against Rotarians or Clubs by the alleged abuser.

12. Travel by Youth

Youth travel outside of the community must comply with RI and district youth protection policies. For all youth travel sponsored by the district or its clubs, before departure, the host district must:

- Obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians of all youth program participants
- Give parents or legal guardians details about the travel, including locations, accommodations, itineraries, and the organizer's contact information
- Recommended but not required: when traveling more than 150 miles, or 240 kilometers, from the home residence or out of the home country, verify that program participants have adequate insurance, including benefits for medical service, emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, and legal liability in amounts satisfactory to the club or district that is organizing the activity or event, with coverage from the participants' departure until their return
- In addition, for Youth Exchange travel outside of students' host communities or that is not customarily a part of the exchange program, either with their host families or to attend Rotary events, the host district shall receive authorization from the sending district in advance

APPENDIX A

Sample Volunteer Assessment Form

District Policy requires this form to be completed by Club Counselors, mentors, and all adults living in the same home as a family who will host a young person who is involved in a Rotary Youth program.

District 7815

Rotary Club of _____

VOLUNTEER ASSESSMENT FORM

Policy Statement:

It is the duty of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children, elderly, disabled or otherwise vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact.

Your name:

Your address:

Your telephone number:

Your email address:

Date of birth:

Member of the Rotary Club since (if applicable):

Who else lives with you (names and ages); All persons over the age of 18 residing in the home of a potential host family acknowledge and agree by signing below to the club obtaining a Police Record check. (Please attach a separate sheet of paper if additional space is required) A photocopy of each adult's birth certificate and driver's license is required to insure correct spelling/name on the police check form.

Name (please print)

Age

Signature

Do you have any previous experience of working with children, elderly or disabled people?

Please give details, including whether family members or not:

Please give details of any qualifications or training you or your spouse/partner have that might be relevant or helpful:

Have you or anyone living with you ever been convicted of an offence in which children were victims, or which involved activities (including internet use) of a sexual nature? Please describe. This information will be kept confidential and not used to discriminate unfairly. The information is required to prevent the abuse of children and will not be used for any other purpose:

Are you prohibited by any Court Order, agreement or Bond from associating with or contacting any person, including any child?

Please give us details of 2 people we can contact who will give you a reference: (This person should not be a friend, relative or Club member)

WAIVER

IN CONSIDERATION of my acceptance and participation in the youth programs, I, to the full extent permitted by law, hereby release and agree to save, hold harmless, and indemnify all members, officers, directors, committee members, and employees of the participating Rotary clubs and districts, and of Rotary International (“Indemnitees”), from any or all liability for any loss, property damage, personal injury, or death, including any such liability that may arise out of the negligence of any of the Indemnitees or may be suffered or claimed by me as a result of an investigation of my background in connection with this affidavit.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Interview conducted by:

_____ on _____, 200____.
Interviewer's Signature Date

Home Visited Conducted by:

_____ on _____, 200____.
Interviewer's Signature Date

Recommended for Approval:

_____ on _____, 200____.
Counselor's Signature Date

APPLICANT STATUS	REQUIREMENT	ACTION
All Applicants	Volunteer Assessment Form	Submitted to Club Counselor
	Security Clearance Form	Submitted to District Abuse Prevention Coordinator
	Personal Interview	Conducted by Counselor
	Home Visit (for host families)	Conducted by Counselor
	List of 2 Personal References	Contacted by Counselor (This step is at the discretion of the Counselor for individuals who have been a member of the club for more than 2 years)

Once the Volunteer Assessment Form has been completed and given to the Counselor, and the Police Check report obtained, the Counselor must determine whether the applicant and the applicant's family are suitable people to be a host family based on the information provided.

A copy of the Volunteer Assessment Form is then provided to the District Abuse Prevention Coordinator (DPAC).

This applicant provides the completed Security Clearance Form directly to the DPAC.

The DPAC then reviews the Volunteer Assessment Form and the Security Clearance form and advises the Counselor as to whether the applicant(s) is/are deemed to be acceptable as a Club Counselor, mentor, or host family for a young person participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program.

APPENDIX B

Examples of Non-leading Interview Techniques For Sexual Abuse & Harassment Allegations

1. *Must not contain answer*

Leading

Did it happen at your house?
Was your host mom there?
Did he tell you not to tell anyone?

Non-Leading

Where did it happen?
Who was there?
What was said to you?

2. *Must not contain a choice of answers*

Leading

Was he wearing pants or shorts?
Were you sitting up or lying down?
Were you scared, angry or sad?

Non-Leading

Tell me what he looked like.
Where were you in the room?
How did you feel?

3. *Must not name the suspected offender before the child has identified the person*

Leading

Was it your host father who touched you?
Did he tell you to keep a secret?
We have been told you are having a problem with your _____.

Non-Leading

Who touched you?
Has anyone asked you to keep this a secret?
Do you know why you are here?

4. *Must not contain explicit details of the alleged offence*

Leading

Did he make you rub his penis up and down?
Did white stuff come out of his penis?
Which finger did he use to hurt you?

Non-Leading

What did he do next?
Then what happened?
What was it that hurt you?

5. Must not contain the interviewer's assumptions

Leading

We are going to ask you some questions about what happened to you.
What kind of car did you go in?
Where was the bed in the room?
Tell me about your mom's house.

Non-Leading

Do you know why you are here?
How did you get there?
Can you tell me what was in the room?
Tell me about where your mom lives.