

Rotary  **ROTARY DISTRICT 9685**  
**YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

“Rotary’s leadership is united in stating that Rotary does not tolerate speech or behaviour that promotes bias, discrimination, prejudice, or hatred because of age, ethnicity, race, colour, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. There is no place within Rotary for racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, classism or ageism. We do not believe that this is a political stance and we do believe that we should openly discuss these issues within our organisation.”

HOLGER KNAACK  
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



## Rationale for District 9685 Youth Protection Policy

Developing and implementing an effective youth protection policy demonstrates our district’s commitment to protecting Rotary youth program participants. This document provides a basic framework for our district policy for all youth programs.

This Policy has been customised to meet the needs and expectations of our local and legal circumstances, and has been reviewed by the District Youth Protection Committee, in which a number of members are legally qualified and or have extensive professional and personal experience in the area of Youth Protection.

One of the Objects of our Rotary International District 9685 Inc. Constitution – seeks to, recognise, adopt and support the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), as follows:

*“To support Clubs within the District to advance the recognition of the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, that the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care, assistance and protection.”*

### DISTRICT 9685 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

#### 1. Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth

District 9685 strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, ALL Rotarians, Rotarians’ spouses and partners, Friends of Rotary and other volunteers shall safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from identity theft, verbal, emotional, financial, harassment, stalking, image – based, cyberbullying, spiritual or religious, physical, sexual, reproductive and psychological

abuse.

## 2. Definitions

**Volunteer** – Any adult involved with Rotary youth activities who interacts directly with youth, whether supervised or unsupervised. Volunteering was defined by the Volunteering Australia Board after considerable consultation in 2013-2015 as ***“Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain”.***

This definition aligns with the United Nations view that volunteering ‘should be for the common good. It should directly or indirectly benefit people outside the family or household or else benefit a cause, even though the person volunteering normally benefits as well<sup>1</sup>. Volunteering is often considered as contributing to community wellbeing and volunteering activities cover all sectors of society, leisure and hobby areas.

Rotary volunteers include:

- Club and district youth program officers and committee members
- Rotary member and nonmember counselors
- Members and nonmembers and their spouses and partners who work with students during activities or outings or who transport students to events
- Youth Exchange host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including host siblings and other family members
- Friends of Rotary, those persons engaged in fellowship – fundraising – supporting service projects – and the like in the interest of the Objects of Rotary and to abide by the [Rotary Four – Way Test](#).

**Youth program participant** – Anyone who participates in a Rotary youth program, regardless of age.

## 3. Legal Entity and Liability Insurance

That [Rotary International District 9685 Inc.](#) is part of a legal entity known as [Rotary International](#). This entity has been formed under the laws of the state of New South Wales, Australia on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 and is valid at this time.

The Rotary International District 9685 Inc. carries liability insurance with appropriate coverage and policy limits. This policy protects the organisation from third-party claims and lawsuits alleging negligence by the organisation, its employees, or its volunteers.

## 4. Club Compliance

The [district governor](#) is responsible for supervising and controlling all youth activities in the district, including those associated with Rotary Youth Exchange. The district will monitor all participating clubs and ensure that they comply with youth protection and Rotary Youth Exchange certification requirements, including the [Working With Children Check \(WWCC\)](#).

The [Working With Children Check \(WWCC\)](#) is a requirement for anyone who works or volunteers in child-related work in NSW. It involves a [National Police Check](#) (criminal history record check) and a review of reportable workplace misconduct. The outcome of a check is either a clearance to work or volunteer with children or a bar against working with children. If cleared, the check will be valid for 5 years, however applicants are continuously monitored.

At the [Office of the Children’s Guardian](#), their goal is to create safe places for children and young people, and they recognise that most organisations share this goal. To help child-related organisations create safer places, they will be following an escalation model of compliance and enforcement with a focus on capability building in organisations. They have from 2021 a new [Compliance and Enforcement policy](#) that makes it clear what is expected of organisations that work with children.

Their 2021 focus is on ensuring child-related employers are:

- registered as employers in the Working with Children Check system
- verifying child-related workers’ Working with Children Checks

If your Rotary Club or support organisation works with children and they are not complying with these laws, fines apply – but you do have some time to get your records in order.

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<sup>1</sup> [United Nations \(2011\). State of the World's Volunteerism Report, 2011: Universal Values for Global Well-being. United Nations Volunteers, P4](#)

The [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) is offering a one-off amnesty for employers to verify their workers by 30 June 2021. This amnesty applies to employers who engage workers in child related work that:

1. are registered or should be registered as an employer for the Working with Children Check; and
2. have not previously verified any of their workers.

After this date, enforcement action will be taken against employers who have not complied with this obligation.

There will be no amnesty period for employers that engage people in child-related work who are barred or interim barred from working with children as it places children and young persons at serious risk of harm.

#### **Resources – Office of the Children's Guardian - OCG:**

- [Aboriginal Applicants and Working With Children Check](#)
- [Behaving Ethically – Manual on ethical behaviour as a NSW public sector employee](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Government sector employees](#)
- [Compliance and Enforcement Policy - OCG](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2018 - OCG](#)
- [Gifts and Benefits Policy - OCG](#)
- [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009 – Access Application - OCG](#)
- [Compliance and Email Policy OCG](#)
- [Multicultural Plan 2020 – 2023 - OCG](#)

The **District Youth Protection Officer** (DYPO), formerly the District Child Protection and Sexual Harassment Officer, shall be the **Chairperson of the District Youth Protection Committee** (DYPC), formerly the Child Protection and Sexual Harassment Committee. The DYPC will consist of Rotarians who are either legally qualified and or have such other extensive experience in youth protection and or youth service. The DYPO will report directly to the District Governor, and the DYPC is part of the Administration/Club Service Team for District 9685.

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 youth exchange program in accordance with District 9685 and RI policies
- Confirmation in writing that volunteers will be prohibited from contact with youth exchange 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 Youth Exchange Program, including brochures, applications, policies, and [social media websites](#), including Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat, Instagram and the like.
- Any club youth protection training materials

#### **5. Volunteer Selection and Screening**

RI and District 9685 will not tolerate (zero tolerance) any form of abuse or harassment. Including, but not limited to, identity theft, verbal, emotional, financial, harassment, stalking, image – based, cyberbullying, spiritual or religious, physical, sexual, reproductive and psychological abuse.

Every rape, every sexual assault, every act of harassment or bullying is abhorrent. It does not matter where these wrongs occur. It does not matter who is involved. There are no allowances or exceptions. Although neither equal in degree nor effect, each offence violates a fundamental principle, most closely associated with the 18th century philosopher Immanuel Kant, namely that of “[respect for persons](#)”. This principle recognises every person as possessing intrinsic dignity – irrespective of age, gender, culture, sexual orientation or any other marker of difference. It establishes our basic equality and forbids us ever to use another person merely as a means to an end. Thus, the prohibition against slavery, torture, genocide and all the great evils of which people are capable.

All Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers who are interested in working with youth exchange program participants must meet RI and district eligibility requirements. RI and District 9685 prohibits the membership and participation of any Rotarian or non-Rotarian volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been known to have engaged in sexual abuse or sexual harassment or been convicted of a serious indictable offence in NSW or similar serious offence in another Australian or International jurisdiction.

**Districts 9685 will maintain confidential records** of individuals prohibited from contact with youth and make sure that these prohibitions are implemented consistently throughout the district from year to year. The District Youth Protection Officer (DYPO) will take care and control of these documents and treat them as “confidential”.

Rotarians and non-Rotarian volunteers who are prohibited from working with youth also shall not serve as district Interact chair, Interact club adviser, district RYLA chair, district Youth Exchange chair, district Youth Protection Officer (DYPO) or the District Youth Protection Committee (DYPC), district National Youth Science Forum (NYSF) chair, district Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment (RYPEN) chair, or in any other locally appointed club or district role or committee in which they might have contact with youth.

If a person is accused of sexual abuse or harassment and law enforcement’s investigation is inconclusive, or if law enforcement declines to investigate, additional safeguards are necessary to protect any youth program participants with whom the accused might have future contact, as well as the accused. A person who has been cleared of charges may apply to continue as a youth program volunteer. Such reinstatement is discretionary and is not a right, and reinstatement to a former position is not guaranteed.

**All Rotarian and non -Rotarian Youth Exchange volunteers who have direct, unsupervised contact with program participants shall:**

- Complete a District 9685 Rotary Youth Program Volunteer Information & Declaration Form
- Undergo a criminal background check (subject to local laws and practices)
- Be interviewed, preferably in person
- Provide a list of personal referees and their contact information (referees may not include family members and no more than one Rotary member) – Referees are requested to provide a written reference (recommended between 3 to 5 written references be submitted). References should clearly state the opinion of the Referee as to the experience and suitability of the applicant to be involved with the Youth Exchange Program.

Youth Exchange host families must also meet these selection and screening requirements.

**For Youth Exchange host families, the interview determines suitability. It should demonstrate:**

- Commitment to the safety and security of students
  - Appropriate motives for hosting a student consistent with Rotary’s 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
- Provide a list of personal references and their contact information (references may not include family members and no more than one Rotary member)
  - Comply with RI and district guidelines for the Youth Exchange program

**Youth Exchange host families must also:**

- Complete a written Application
- Undergo announced and unannounced home visits both before and during the placement; home visits must be conducted during each year the family participates, even for repeat host families

Note: 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. All adult visitors to the host home must be known personally to the host family, knowing that the student may come into contact with the adult visitor.

**Youth Exchange students must be appointed a Rotary counselor who meets the criteria for all volunteers.**

**Also:**

- A counselor must not hold a role of authority over the student’s exchange (for example, a member of a student’s host family, school principal, club president, district or club Youth Exchange officer or DYPO)
- Counselors must be able to respond to any problems or concerns that may arise, including instances of physical, sexual,

or psychological abuse, harassment including but not limited to identity theft, verbal, emotional, financial, harassment, stalking, image – based, cyberbullying, spiritual or religious, physical, sexual, reproductive and psychological abuse or any suspected breach of this Policy.

## 6. Participant Selection and Screening

All students who are interested in the District 9685 Youth Exchange program must meet district guidelines and:

- Complete a written application
- Be interviewed by the sending 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 and district level to determine the student's suitability to participate in the program.

## 7. Training

District 9685 and member clubs may provide youth protection training and information on youth programs. The District 9685 Youth Exchange Program Committee will conduct the training sessions.

The District 9685 Youth Exchange program must provide youth protection training and information to all students and volunteers. The District 9685 Youth Exchange Program Committee will conduct the training sessions. The district will:

- Adapt Rotary's Youth Protection Guide to reflect district policy and guidelines, information on local customs and culture, and legal requirements
- Develop a schedule that specifies who will be trained, how often, and in what formats
- Conduct specialised training for those involved in Youth Exchange:
  - District governor
  - District Youth Protection Officer (DYPO)
  - District Youth Exchange officer and committee members
  - Club Youth Exchange officer and committee members
  - Rotary counselors
  - Other Rotary members and nonmembers who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours or district events
  - Host families
  - Students (outbound and inbound)
- Maintain records of participation

## 8. Responding to Allegations

The district takes all allegations of abuse and or harassment and will protect young persons from identity theft, verbal, emotional, financial, harassment, stalking, image – based, cyberbullying, spiritual or religious, physical, sexual, reproductive and psychological abuse, seriously and will handle them in accordance with the **District's Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines** (appendix B).

The district will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations, the [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) and in NSW the [Stronger Communities Cluster of Ministries](#).

The district shall appoint a **District Youth Protection Officer** (DYPO) to advise it and its clubs on abuse and harassment prevention and to help manage risks and any crises that affect the safety of youth. The youth protection officer should have professional experience in counseling, social work, law, law enforcement, or child development, and may or may not be a Rotary member. The DYPO reports to the District Governor (DG). The DYPO will chair the District Youth Protection Committee.

The district should develop a **crisis management plan** as outlined in **Rotary's Youth Protection Guide**.

## 9. Travel by Youth

Youth travel outside of the community must comply with RI and district youth protection policies and guidelines.

For all youth travel sponsored by District 9685 or its clubs, the following must be undertaken before departure:

- 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 organiser's contact information
- Recommended but not required: when traveling more than 150 miles, or 240 kilometers, from the host residence or out of the District 9685 boundary, 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 organising the activity or event, with coverage from the participants' departure until their return
- In addition, for Youth Exchange travel outside of the District 9685 boundary, or is not customarily a part of the exchange program, either with their host families or to attend Rotary events, District 9685 shall obtain written permission from the students' parents or legal guardians, who shall also receive details about the trip, including locations, accommodation, itineraries, modes of transport and the organisers contact information before departure

## 10. District 9685 Youth Exchange Administration

The District 9685 Youth Exchange program, in collaboration with participating clubs, must also:

- Confirm that all inbound students have at least the minimum insurance that is required by the [Rotary Code of Policies](#) as at March 2021 (Because the host district must be able to arrange immediate and emergency medical attention when it is needed, it must be satisfied that the student's coverage is adequate). District 9685 requires:

The insurance policy in District 9685 meets or exceeds the minimum insurance as prescribed by Rotary International. Most inbound students take the insurance offered through District 9685, which the Insurance Officer has confirmed to meet the RI standard. Should a student take out a policy that is not the Australian policy, they are required to forward a copy of the insurance policy to the Insurance Officer to ensure that it does meet the minimum RI requirements.

- Store participant and volunteer records securely at the residence of the Youth Exchange Chair for a minimum of 7 years after participation, in accordance with all applicable privacy laws
- Provide each student with a list of local services (rape and suicide crisis hotlines; alcohol and drug awareness programs; relevant law enforcement agencies; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer services; etc.). This list must also include the following contacts:
  - For inbound students: host Rotary counselor, host club president, host district Youth Exchange chair, host district governor, host District Youth Protection Officer and at least two nonmember 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 the Rotary counselor and who can help the students with any problems
  - For outbound students: sending Rotary counselor, sending club president, sending district Youth Exchange chair, sending district governor and sending District Youth Protection Officer
- Complete an annual survey reporting on program activity for RI
- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to students
- Report all incidents (including abuse or harassment allegations, identity theft, verbal, emotional, financial, harassment, stalking, image – based, cyberbullying, spiritual or religious, physical, sexual, reproductive and psychological abuse accidents, crimes, early returns, and death) that involve Youth Exchange students to the DG, DYPO and RI staff (youthprotection@rotary.org) within 72 hours of learning of the incident
- Prohibit any unauthorised exchange activity, such as sending a student on exchange outside of the Rotary Youth Exchange program or outside of the district certification structure
- Develop contingency hosting plans that list prescreened families.
- Establish the criteria and procedures for removing a student from the host family. Arrange for temporary contingent housing in advance.
- Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host inbound students as a condition of sending students on an exchange.



- Ensure that long-term program participants stay with multiple host families, if possible. It is recommended that they be placed with three host families during their exchange. If circumstances prevent multiple host family placements, the sending and the host district must agree and must inform the student's parent or legal guardian in advance. At least one backup host family must be available.
- Request a monthly report from each inbound and outbound program participant that includes information on their current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange committee can review the reports and assist program participants as needed.

- **11. District 9685 Youth Protection Policy Documentation**

District 9685 has undertaken a review and updated its Policy and associated documentation dealing with Youth. This will be an ongoing process of review as part of the quality management process within the District.

The 1<sup>st</sup> document for ALL clubs to consider when proposing undertaking a Youth orientated project will be the **Rotary District 9685 – Youth Protection Policy**.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> document, **Attachment A: District 9685 Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report** will be only necessary if an Incident occurs and needs reporting. *Please note the “within 72 hours” reporting condition to RI.*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> document, **Attachment B: District 9685 Rotary Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines** will be of assistance in understanding what to do if there is an incident.

The 4<sup>th</sup> document, **Attachment C: District 9685 Rotary Youth Program Volunteer Information and Declaration Form** (previously Form 3) needs to be completed by ALL persons seeking a role in the Districts Youth Program

- **Policy and Documents:**

1. Rotary District 9685 – Youth Protection Policy – 7 pages
2. Attachment A: – District 9685 Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report - 3 pages
3. Attachment B: – District 9685 Rotary Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines - 4 pages
4. Attachment C: – District 9685 Rotary Youth Program Volunteer Information & Declaration Form – 5 pages
5. RI Youth Protection Guide 775 (The Handbook)

**In 2002, the RI Board of Directors adopted a Statement for Working with Youth, which applies to all Rotary activities:**

**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' spouse, and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.**

**Adopted by the RI Board of Directors in November 2002; amended in November 2006**

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