

Rotary Youth Exchange Club Certification Criteria

Clubs participating in the Youth Exchange program must show a clear commitment to the safety and wellbeing of their exchange students. To this end Districts participating in Youth Exchange in Australia require their Clubs involved in the program to demonstrate their commitment by agreeing to follow the simple steps listed in this document.

When Club members have read and understood the content of this document and they agree to comply with the requirements if they elect to host or sponsor an exchange student, they should apply for **Club certification** by completing the “Rotary Youth Exchange Club Check List and Compliance Statement” and forward it to the District Youth Exchange Committee Chairman.

Incoming student certification requests must be sent prior to the student’s arrival

- for July students by the end of March
- for January students by the end of September
- for March students by the end of December.

Outbound student certification requests must be sent 4 weeks before the district interviews.

It is normal procedure that any Club sponsoring an outbound student will be required to host an inbound student before sponsoring a subsequent outbound student.

Your District Youth Exchange Committee will assist with training to implement these policies and make them easily achievable.

Definition of Terms

A Volunteer

A “volunteer” is an adult, male or female

- who may, at times on his or her own, be responsible for caring for an exchange student
- whose role is such that there is seen to be an opportunity for the student to be placed at risk of abuse
- who has been police, reference checked and approved as prescribed in Section 1.
- Youth Exchange Committee member or any Rotary Club counsellor or any host family member over 18 years of age living in the family home while the student is living there. A “volunteer” may also include Rotarians or others who take students on organised events or adults who it is planned will be caring for Rotary Exchange Students at times on their own where there is seen to be an opportunity for the student to be placed at risk of abuse.

A Responsible Adult¹

A “responsible adult” is an adult male or female

- who in a family or group situation is responsible for caring for an exchange student
- whose role is such that there is seen to be virtually no opportunity for the student to be placed at risk of abuse

¹ It is realised that nothing Rotary or anyone does can guarantee the complete safety of our students. To give them the chance to participate in the many opportunities that will spring up during their year living in our country and to ensure their safety to the best of our ability, we have introduced the classification of “Responsible Adult”. This will afford safety in situations of low risk where there is insufficient time to obtain people qualified as “volunteers” or where the risk is negligible. To rob them of these experiences would make their life sterile and their exchange meaningless.

- who the student's counsellor and/or host parents would establish is a suitable and caring person, acting as conscientious parents would in protecting their own underage teenage child
- who has not been police and formally reference checked
- who might be the family of a school friend who invites the student for an overnight stay, a Rotarian who invites the student for a family meal, a close relative of the host family who invites the student to go away with their own family for a short period, or any similar person where there is virtually no opportunity for sexual harassment to occur

Student: Youth involved with Rotary Youth Exchange, regardless of whether they are of the age of majority.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse refers to engaging in sexual acts with a student or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in sexual actions alone or with another person of any age, of the same sex or the opposite sex.

Additional examples of sexual abuse could include, but are not limited to:

- Non-touching offences
- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a student to sexual or pornographic material

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favours or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse, and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitise, confuse or groom their victims.

Examples of sexual harassment could include, but are not limited to -

- sexual motivated advances including comments to the effect that the adult in a position of trust finds the student sexually attractive
- sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, and comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures or drawings, videos and internet images
- sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures and suggestive or insulting comments.

Emotional Harassment: Emotional harassment is any action or comment that unreasonably disturbs the student. This includes but is not limited to repeated comments about a student's social background, home country, language, culture, personal appearance or other characteristics which are offensive, embarrassing or humiliating to the student to whom they are directed.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is any physical harm inflicted on a student and includes but is not limited to -

- providing insufficient nourishment for the student
- depriving the student of a reasonable amount of sleep
- requiring the student to do an unreasonable amount of work
- inflicting physical pain on the student

Abuse & Harassment: Abuse and harassment refers to any form of abuse or harassment described above whether it is sexual, emotional or physical.

Procedures relating to hosting inbound students

1. Club Certification – To be certified to host an **inbound student**² Clubs are required commit to the selection of caring and responsible people to fulfil the roles of Club counsellor, host families and others who are called upon to assist in the Youth Exchange program. To confirm they will do this, Clubs are to fill in the form “**Rotary Youth Exchange Club Check List and Compliance Statement**” YESP CL 5 and return it to their **Youth Exchange Chairman**. Keep a copy for the Club records. Note at the time of application the minimum information required on the form is all details for the **Club counsellor** and the **first host family** other than receipt of Police Checks, “Blue Cards” or optimal alternate legal form of certification.

Counsellors, host family members over 18 years of age and any **other volunteers** who by reason of their activities have access to the student without the presence of another responsible adult for a period of time such that they could place that student at risk of abuse. These people are classified as “Volunteers”. See Definition of Terms, Dot Point one. Volunteers must

- obtain a Police Check or a “Blue Card” or optimal alternate legal form of certification in the state or country in which they live³ to confirm they -
 - have not committed a crime against a child or young person
 - are not the subject of an existing court order preventing them from being with or within a certain distance of another person because of behaviour which the court deems is of a threatening or disturbing nature.
- complete the “Information and Declaration Form” CL 4.⁴

Clubs also commit to selecting other adults who may in a family or group situation, for a short period of time, be responsible for caring for an exchange student. Any such adult must be what Rotary Australia classifies as a “Responsible Adult”. See Definition of Terms, Dot Point 2.

2. Club Inbound Counsellor – Following the selection of a potential counsellor(s), appoint two suitable Club members (one may be, but need not be, the chairman and the second a member of the committee administering Youth Exchange in the Club) to visit and talk with the candidate(s). If the candidate(s) after fully understanding their duties and responsibilities wish to be a counsellor(s), give them a Police Check or equivalent form and a CL 4 form. Explain the forms and point out before nominating a referee they must check with that person to confirm the person will be happy to be phoned by Rotary for a reference.

Ensure the Club’s inbound student counsellor is a person who (if there are two people involved in counselling the following requirements apply to both) --

- has a rapport with young people and is committed to the student’s well being and happiness but also a person able to ensure, in a non-confrontational manner, that the student and host families abide by the Rotary rules and the student fulfils their obligations as a family and school member
- is of the same sex as the student or alternatively
 - that the counsellor’s partner will act in the capacity of counsellor
 - or
 - that another member of the Rotary Club of the same sex as the student will be appointed as an assistant counsellor
- is not a member of one of the student’s host families
- is able to be totally impartial in a dispute between the student and the host family

² Due to the very different timing involved in sponsoring an outbound student and hosting an inbound student, it is not practical for a club to make application for both certifications on the one form.

³ Some Rotary districts in Australia cover two or more states and some cover other smaller Pacific and Indian Ocean nations.

⁴ All persons over the age of 18 years residing in a host family need to complete the above two requirements.

- is not the Club president, the principal or the teacher responsible for the student in the school the student attends or the Youth Exchange Program chair
 - is prepared to greet the student on arrival and organise their settling in, school enrolment and in particular
 - set up the student's emergency money account with the counsellor's, another Rotarian's and the student's signature, any one of whom is to operate the account. This should be done as soon as practicable.
 - organise safe-keeping for the student's passport and airline tickets (after taking copies) in a place where they will be safe but where the student has access to them
 - discourage the student from phoning home too frequently.
 - who has the time and commitment to talk with the student frequently and facilitates the student's involvement with the Rotary Club
 - is prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the student is protected and treated kindly and fairly
 - is prepared to undertake the required District training sessions
 - is familiar with and able to implement if necessary RI's "Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines" YESP DI 3
3. Ensure that the Club has or feels it can obtain suitable caring host families. These families need to be –
- preferably a minimum of three and a maximum of five families with their hosting times divided somewhat evenly over the year
 - preferably a mix of Rotary and non-Rotary families
 - volunteers whose motivation for hosting is consistent with Rotary's ideals of promoting international understanding through cultural exchange.
- Appoint two suitable Rotarians or a Rotarian and partner to visit and talk with potential host families in their homes.⁵ It is preferable one delegate is a female. One may, but need not, be a student counsellor or the chairman of the committee administering Youth Exchange in the Club.⁶ These delegates should, in a warm and friendly manner –
- explain the obligations, rules and procedures relating to hosting a Youth Exchange student.
 - be observant and assess the suitability of the family as a host family. Their suitability needs to include factors such as
 - your assessment of the level of commitment they will make to the student's welfare and happiness
 - their financial ability to properly care for the student
 - their willingness to include the student a member rather than as a guest
 - evidence of their aptitude to ensure that the student adheres to Rotary and family rules.
 - Evidence that they will assess the suitability of other families with whom their student wishes to stay, ensuring they meet the requirements of a "Responsible Adult"; e.g. the family of a school friend.
 - ask to look at the host family residence particularly the bedroom and the bathroom the student will be using to assess their suitability. Students should be allocated their own bedroom. Where this is not possible the student may be permitted to share a bedroom with someone of the same sex provided everything else about the host family is ideal, the student does not object and is offered a reasonable degree of privacy. Advise the family of any necessary changes, e.g. a lock on the bathroom door, a chance to give the student more privacy to study, etc.
 - explain that should a student disclose sexual harassment or abuse, Rotary International "Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines" show

⁵ The same degree of investigation into an experienced and successful host family will not be required as with a new family. Nevertheless it is important to confirm all host families are up to date with the latest regulations.

⁶ Once a student is in residence in a home it is part of a counsellor's role to visit the student in her/his home occasionally (sometimes unannounced) to see that everything is still in order. These visits can be when the counsellor picks up the student for an outing.

the procedure which must be followed. Give them a copy of the document and go through it with them. Also point out that under Australian state and territory laws there is a legal obligation to report all suspected cases of sexual abuse and serious harassment to the police.

If, after fully understanding their obligations, ask, “Do you still wish to host a student”? If the answer is yes, provide a Police Check or equivalent application form and a CL 4 form to be completed by each family member over the age of 18. Explain the forms as necessary and point out that, before nominating a referee, that person must agree to being contacted by a Rotary Student Exchange representative.

4. **Interview Outcomes** - At the conclusion of all interviews whether they be for student counsellors, host families or other volunteers, the same two delegates who conducted the interviews should decide whether the candidate(s) on the basis of information learned during the visit is a suitable person(s) to be involved with their Club’s exchange student.

If so the delegates should –

- complete, as appropriate, the top section of the “Rotary Youth Exchange Host Family Member Screening Report” CL 2 or “The Counsellor or Other Volunteer Screening Report” CL3
- phone and check 3 of the references preferably in this order
 - the employer who has known the applicant for the longest period of time during the last five years (if available).
 - any youth organisation where the candidate worked or volunteered (if applicable)
 - one of the personal references provided by each candidate
- If there is any doubt as to the suitability of the person to be selected after the above three people have been contacted, all of the remaining referees including all employers should be contacted.
- After reflecting on the various references, complete all but Police Check information on the CL 2 or CL 3 forms and if now fully satisfied with all candidates, tentatively approve them for their selected duty.
- After receiving evidence the candidate(s) have obtained satisfactory police or alternative certification, complete the Police Check or alternative certification information on CL 2 or CL 3. Notify the candidate(s) of their acceptance noting this on the forms also.

<u>Inbound Students</u>	
<u>Club Certification</u>	
Submit the Club application to host an inbound student to the District Youth Exchange Committee	For July inbound student End of March For Jan. inbound student End of Sept For March inbound student End Dec.
<u>Club Counsellor</u>	
Select and brief a counsellor	For July inbound student End of March For Jan. inbound student End of Sept For March inbound student End Dec.
Obtain a Police Check, “Blue Card” or optimum alternate legal certification	For July inbound student Mid May For Jan. inbound student Mid Nov. For March inbound student Mid Feb.
<u>Host Families</u>	
Select, interview and brief the first host family	For July inbound student End of March For Jan. inbound student End of Sept. For March inbound student End Dec.
Obtain a Police Check, “Blue Card” or optimum alternate legal certification	For July inbound student Mid May For Jan. inbound student Mid Nov. For March inbound student Mid Feb.

<u>Inbound Students cont'd</u>	
Select, interview and brief subsequent host families (if not done at the same time as the first)	6 weeks before the student joins them
Commence the process to obtain a Police Check, "Blue Card" or optimum alternate legal certification	6 weeks before the student joins them

Procedures Relating to Sponsoring Outbound Students

1. **Club Certification** – To be certified to sponsor an outbound student, Clubs commit to the selection of caring and responsible people to fulfil the roles of Club counsellor and any other people called upon to assist in the Youth Exchange Program. To confirm their commitment Clubs fill in the **Rotary Youth Exchange Club Check List and Compliance Statement – Sponsoring an Outbound Student YESP CL 6** and return it to their **Youth Exchange Chairman**. Keep a copy for the Club records.

2. **Selecting a Student** - The Club should be prepared to carefully interview and select any potential students to go overseas. This procedure should include --
 - ensuring all applicants have completed a Club application form which should require information about
 - the student's schooling level and achievements,
 - any other sporting and community achievements,
 - the student's age,
 - the countries where the student would prefer to be hosted
 - any countries where the student would prefer not to be placed
 - the student's parents' or guardians' details.
 - separately interviewing the student and the student's parents or guardians using either a panel from the Rotary Club or a panel drawn from a group of Rotary Clubs in the local area, all of whom are looking to select a student. Ensure that not only does the student really want to go on exchange and has the ability to do so, but that the parents or guardians are enthusiastic about the student's going and can afford the cost. Questions need to be carefully structured to ensure all participants answer truthfully.

3. **Club Outbound Counsellor** - The same procedure should be employed in selecting the Club's outbound counsellor(s) as in selecting an inbound counsellor(s). Ensure the Club's Outbound Student Counsellor(s) is
 - a person who meets the same requirements as an inbound counsellor as listed in the first two points in Section 2 "Club Inbound Counsellor".
 - able to assist the selected student to fill in the International Application form and prepare for the District Interview.
 - prepared if required by the District to accompany the student and the student's parents or guardians to the District Interview.
 - able to invite the student to several Rotary Club meetings before their departure for overseas and at one of these meetings have the student address the Club. Most Clubs have the student give the introductory talk they will give to their overseas Club.
 - committed to keep in touch with the student before they depart and assist them as needed with any visa paperwork, and to get to know them well and become a friend.
 - able to keep in regular contact with the student while overseas and let the Club know what the student is doing and how they are progressing.
 - prepared to personally debrief the student and help with any problems of readjustment after their return.
 - Familiar with and able to implement if necessary RI's "Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines" YESP DI 3

<u>Outbound Students</u>	
<u>Club</u>	
Submitting the Club application for certification by the District Youth Exchange Committee to sponsor an outbound student	4 weeks before the District student interviews
<u>Club Counsellor</u>	
Selecting and briefing a counsellor(s) for the Club's outbound student	4 weeks before the official Club interview date
Obtain a Police Check, "Blue Card" or optimum alternate legal certification	4 weeks before the official Club interview date
Interviewing and briefing the student's parents	By the official Club interview date

Club Protection Officer

The Club will appoint a Club Protection Officer if none exists. The Club Protection Officer will be an appropriately experienced Rotarian in the Club preferably not directly involved in running the Club's youth exchange program. This Rotarian could be the Club Risk Management Officer, the Club president or any other suitable Rotarian.

The duties of the Protection Officer are to

- ensure all of the major Club duties in relation to hosting and/or sponsoring an exchange student have been carried out
- verify the people responsible have completed the required forms
- complete and return the "Rotary Youth Exchange Club Protection Officer Check List and Declaration" YESP CL 7 form to the District Youth Exchange Chairman by 31st March each year.

Maintenance of Information

In keeping with Australian privacy laws and the Australian District Exchange Privacy Policy, information collected by the District Youth Exchange Committee and the District Youth Protection Committee shall be kept as follows.

- Clubs are to keep all YESP CL 2, 3, & 4 forms for 5 years after the completion of the student's exchange year to which they relate. Should a host family or volunteers continue to be involved in Youth Exchange for a second or more consecutive year(s), their forms should be maintained until five years after the final year of their involvement in the program or until they allow their police or alternate checks to expire and then destroyed.
- Copies of all YESP CL 5, 6, & 7 forms are to be destroyed by the Club annually at the conclusion of the Rotary year to which they apply. The District will keep their copies of these documents for five years.

NB - All YESP CL 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 FORMS MUST BE KEPT IN A SECURE PLACE AND ONLY ACCESSED BY THE CLUB OFFICERS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO COMPILE OR SEE THEM.