

Appendix G: Safeguarding requirements for specific Rotary activities – Youth Exchange and related activities involving home hosting and residential experience away from home

Introduction

This section is concerned with Youth Exchange, Camps, Tours, international and multi-District Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, international and multi-District Interact Rallies and any activity involving home hosting and residential experience away from home. For ease of understanding, in the remainder of this document the term used is Youth Exchange and camps. This section should be read in conjunction with the Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland (RIBI) District Youth Exchange Association (DYEA) [Youth Exchange Manual](#) which contains full guidance on established good practice.

- Reference must be made to the [Health and Safety Policy](#) (Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland).
- Where the activity is Youth Exchange, as opposed to RYLA or Interact or other activity, then reference should be made to the RI Procedures for the certification of Youth Exchange (issued by RI to District Youth Exchange Officers and District Governors in July of each year).
- Reference may also be made to the RI publication [Youth Exchange handbook](#) - (Rotary International Ref SKU: 746). Available to download from the [RI shop](#).

Background

Youth exchanges are a powerful means of achieving Rotary's international objectives. They provide life-changing experiences for those taking part and are a clear demonstration of Rotary's commitment to vocational service. Everyone has the right to have fun, feel secure and be protected when participating in a Rotary event and every care must be taken to ensure that this applies to participants, Rotarians and helpers alike. Rotary International (RI) requires every District and every Club that is involved in international youth activities to have in place sound policies and procedures that will ensure the safety of all involved.

RIBI is well placed to respond to this requirement: it has in place its agreed [Child Safeguarding policy](#) and has appointed a Compliance Officer. In turn, every District and every Club has adopted the policy and appointed a Safeguarding Officer. The [RIBI Child Safeguarding Policy](#) (with the [Safeguarding Guidance](#) manual) contains much advice that is relevant to Youth Exchange and other related activities: this should be followed.

The guidance in this section supplements and makes reference to the RIBI Child Safeguarding Policy and to RI advice: it does not replace it.

It is important to implement good practice and put in additional checks and balances to ensure that Rotary, the number one service organisation, gives the lead in this important matter of safeguarding in Youth Exchange.

The legal age at which a child becomes an adult varies widely within Great Britain & Ireland and even more so across the world. The framework to ensure that “children” are protected has legal force and the RIBI Safeguarding Policy is based on that legal requirement. However, there is other legislation that necessitates proper procedures. (An example of this is the responsibility of a person who is in a position of trust such as a University lecturer dealing with “adult” students, or a home host for a twenty-two year old visitor, or an instructor in a camp). All incoming students should be considered to be at risk, irrespective of their age, because they may not understand all nuances of our society. As a result, this supplement of the RIBI Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all Youth Exchange students, irrespective of age.

Good practice is the essential feature of Youth Programmes. It must include a clear policy, careful detailed planning, careful selection and induction of personnel and hosts and sound systems to deal with concerns, allegations and whistle blowing. A DBS check is only a small part of the good practice and not an end in itself; it can assist with the selection of people to do a job. It does not indicate that the person is suitable, or not; that is the job of the organiser.

In cases where, at the planning and selection of personnel stage, the age range of incoming students is not known but could include young people under the age of 18 years, then it is recommended organisers should ask all relevant personnel to apply for an Enhanced DBS check through the District Safeguarding Officer.

Where it is clear that the target group for the activity are defined as 18 years and over then a DBS check is not allowed in law. However, organisers should still ask the person if they have a criminal record that would cast doubt on the person's suitability to do the job.

Statement of conduct for working with youth

Rotary International has issued the following statement and is taking action to guarantee the standard of care in the host Clubs and Districts worldwide.

“Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. Rotarians, Rotarians’ spouses and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.”

The RIBI Child Safeguarding Policy underpins this statement.

Youth Exchange and Camps: a statement of policy

To ensure the safeguarding of all those involved in Youth Exchange and camps these essential strands must be in place, regardless of the age of the students participating.

1. Any District or Club that is planning to receive a student must:

- 1.1. Have approved and implemented a safeguarding policy in line with those recommended by RIBI.
- 1.2. Have appointed a Safeguarding officer.
- 1.3. Have appointed a Rotarian to be the named person in charge of the Youth Exchange programme.
- 1.4. Have notified District Safeguarding Officer and/or Youth Exchange Officer/Chairman.
- 1.5. Appoint an independent counsellor for each student, or group of students.
- 1.6. Check and approve the standard and appropriateness of the accommodation provided for a home-hosted placement.
- 1.7. Check and approve the standard and appropriateness of the accommodation provided for other activities.
- 1.8. Select and carry out appropriate checks of persons involved in providing home-hosting.
- 1.9. Select and carry out appropriate checks of persons involved in supervising camps and activities.
- 1.10. Provide appropriate training and induction for all those involved in delivering the exchange or camp.
- 1.11. Provide appropriate training and induction for all inbound students.
- 1.12. Provide inbound students with a list of sources of local help and services.
- 1.13. Check and confirm the quality and health and safety aspects of programmes provided.
- 1.14. Ensure that there are sound arrangements to deal with the expression of concerns and allegations of abuse or harassment.
- 1.15. Ensure that the alleged victim receives appropriate professional support.
- 1.16. Follow RI Guidelines for Youth Exchange Web Sites and the Usage of Rotary Marks.

By so doing a Club or District will comply with the safeguarding requirements of the RI certification secured by RIBI and the District.

2. Any District or Club that is to send a student must:

- 2.1. Confirm that the receiving District holds current RI Certification.
- 2.2. Provide appropriate orientation and training for outbound students and their parents.
- 2.3. Carry out a detailed review on the student's return.

Explanatory notes

Receiving Students

- 1.1 Have approved and implemented a safeguarding policy in line with those recommended by RIBI
Reference should be made to the policy document, '[RIBI Child Safeguarding Policy](#)' (with the [Safeguarding Guidance](#) manual). The document contains much advice relevant to many aspects of youth programmes.
- 1.2 Have appointed a Safeguarding officer
The RIBI document details the duties and responsibilities of the District and the Club safeguarding officers. These persons are available to advise and consult with those planning the programmes. The responsibility for ensuring safe practice and the application of the safeguarding policy lies with the 'named person' in charge of the youth activity.
- 1.3 Have appointed a Rotarian to be the named person in charge of the Youth Exchange programme
This position is essential. Although it is likely that a committee will be involved in the detailed planning there must be one named person who is in overall charge and to whom reference can be made on any matter, including safeguarding issues.
(See Appendix G 'Roles and Responsibilities' below for the duties of the named person).
- 1.4 Have notified District Safeguarding Officer and/or Youth Exchange Officer/Chairman
Rotary Code of Policies section 41.060.23 'International Travel by Youth' states:-
'No individual Rotarian, club, or district shall assist or cooperate in sending a young person abroad on an international travel activity unless careful plans are made in advance covering every aspect of the proposed trip, including approval from the district youth protection officer and district Youth Exchange chair. In districts without a youth protection officer, the district governor and the district Youth Exchange committee chair must approve the arrangements.'
It is a requirement of RI Certification that Club exchanges are arranged within the structure of the District Youth Exchange programme.
- 1.5 Appoint an independent counsellor for each student, or group of students
In short-term or long-term Youth Exchange it is essential that a student is linked to a named counsellor who arranges regular sessions for discussion about the exchange experience. Counsellors should be selected carefully and checks made that they have appropriate background, skills and experience to do the job. People new to the role should be thoroughly trained. An enhanced DBS check is necessary.

One person may counsel several students but there must always be opportunity for one-to-one discussion so that worries and concerns can be considered.

The counsellor must not be one of the home-hosts.

During camps and similar activities at least two members of the supervising staff, one male and one female, should have time and opportunity to relate to the students and to act as counsellors. The facilities should provide a room where one to one and small group discussion can take place. An enhanced DBS is necessary for the staff members.

Selection of, and the role of, the counsellor is explained in the RIBI Districts Youth Exchange Association Manual

- Long Term - Sections [L8](#) and [L9](#)
- Short Term – Sections [S8](#) and [S9](#)
- Camps & Tours – Sections [C\(I\)8](#) and [C\(I\)9](#)

- 1.6 Select and carry out appropriate checks of persons involved in providing home-hosting
[Section HC](#) of the Youth Exchange Manual details the procedures for recruiting, screening and selecting any family that is to host a student.

If the age of the student being hosted is under 16 years and the period of hosting is greater than 28 days then, in law, this is considered to be private fostering and Enhanced DBS Disclosures must be sought all persons in the household of 16 years of age or above.

Should the period of hosting be under 28 days or the student being hosted is 16 or 17 years of age then Enhanced DBS Disclosures must be sought for the parents/guardians only.

1.7 Check and approve the standard and appropriateness of the accommodation provided for a home-hosting placement

A visit to the hosting home must be made to check the sleeping and other arrangements. There should be discussion about access to the home when the hosts are absent during the day and how the student's requirements will mesh into the day-to-day running of the home. In the long term programme short notice home visits should take place at least once for each host family.

1.8 Check and approve the standard and appropriateness of the accommodation provided for other activities

Such an assessment is expected as a normal practice within the risk assessment. If accommodation is commercially provided the organisation will normally be able to provide such information and will have carried out such assessments. Nevertheless, the Rotary organisers should also make a risk assessment as detailed in the RIBI [Health and Safety Policy](#) document and the [Child Safeguarding Policy](#).

1.9 Provide appropriate training and induction for all those involved in delivering the exchange or camp

An RIBI training programme for each new District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is mandatory. Training for Club Safeguarding Officers takes place in each District. Courses for members and volunteers have been developed by RIBI and are available from DSOs.

It is important that each person involved:

- Knows who is in overall charge – The named person – and who is the 'line manager'.
- Is aware of the aims of the programme and understands the methods used in its delivery.
- Is clear about his or her personal role and is able to carry it out.
- Knows the rules and codes of behaviour for participants and other people.
- Is aware that he or she is in a position of trust and what that entails.
- Knows how to act when faced with concerns, allegations and the need for 'whistle blowing'.

1.10 Select and carry out appropriate checks of persons involved in supervising camps and tours and other activities

The [RIBI Child Safeguarding policy](#) (with the [Safeguarding Guidance](#) manual) gives clear advice on this matter. It should be followed.

If the work is with young people under the age of 18 years, or with those considered to be vulnerable as in a 'handicamp', the following key questions should be asked:

- Will the person be teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children and providing advice/guidance on well being?.
- Will the activity be frequent? The term 'frequent' is defined as 'once a week or more', or '4 days or more in a 30 day period' or 'overnight between 2.00am and 6.00am'?
- Will the person have 'unsupervised contact' or be in 'sole charge'?

If 'Yes' is the answers to any of these questions and careful planning cannot render it unnecessary, then DBS checks should be sought as outlined in the [Safeguarding Guidance](#) manual.

1.11 Provide appropriate training and induction for all inbound students

It is important that students understand that any form of abuse or harassment is not acceptable in our culture. They must know that no repercussions to them will happen from them whistle blowing on anything with which they are uncomfortable. They must always have more than one line of communication through Counsellor, Club or District Safeguarding Officer and Club or District Youth Exchange Officer.

Students should be made aware of how they can protect themselves in the wider community. Excellent guidelines are produced by [The Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#) and [Child Safe](#).

1.12 Check and confirm the quality and safety aspects of programmes provided

This is self-evident. The guidance given in the [RIBI Health and Safety Policy](#) and the [RIBI Child Safeguarding policy](#) must be followed.

As far as possible participating students should be given opportunity to comment on and take a part in the formulation of the programme, the codes of behaviour and day to day routines. They should be active participants and not passive recipients of the activities.

The programme should be formally evaluated by all those involved: that will form a useful basis for future programmes.

Copies of the programme must be widely available. The documentation related to the risk assessments must be available for scrutiny.

1.13 Ensure that there are sound arrangements to deal with the expression of concerns and allegations of abuse and/or harassment

In Youth Exchange programmes, the counsellor has a crucial role. It is important that the person is aware of the signs of neglect and abuse and knows who to contact in the event of an incident. The Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) or the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) is likely to be the person with whom the concern is shared and action agreed. The [RIBI Child Safeguarding policy](#) (with the [Safeguarding Guidance](#) manual) document provides guidance.

On Rotary camps and tours where a counsellor may be responsible for several students, arrangements for expressing concerns must be made clear to all involved in the programme. The first point of reference is the named person in charge but an individual may choose a different route to express a concern. The person in charge should follow the advice in the [RIBI Child Safeguarding policy](#) (with the [Safeguarding Guidance](#) manual): the CSO or DSO is the person with whom the concern is shared and action agreed. One of the defined responsibilities of a CSO is to liaise with all local services involved in safeguarding.

RI requires that every District and its Clubs that are engaged in Youth Exchange programmes has a safeguarding policy in place.

Sending Students

2.1 Confidence that the receiving District holds current RI Certification

Any District or Club that is to send a student on Youth exchange must be confident that the receiving District holds current RI Certification and that the exchange or camp is operating under those arrangements. The [list of uncertified Districts](#) must be checked. A link to the list is also available from the [Youth Exchange](#) section the RI website.

2.2 Provide appropriate orientation and training for outbound students and their parents

For outbound students and their parents, a most important means of ensuring a good, safe exchange for everyone involved is the proper provision of training and orientation. If problems arise it is often through a lack of understanding by the student of the rules, of local custom and practise and how to react in any given situation.

For Camps and Tours which involve very short contact with adults and are usually group based, a written guide may be sufficient.

For other outbound short and long term exchanges, comprehensive orientation is required. Part of this should include the parents. Guidelines on how this should be organised are in Section [DY2](#) and [DY2a](#) of the [RIBI Districts Youth Exchange Association manual](#).

2.3 Carry out a detailed review on the student's return

A detailed review should be carried out upon all student's return. This is particularly important if a student has been sent home before the end of their exchange.

Reference should be made to the paragraph headed 'Feedback and Student Reporting' in Section [DY2](#) of the [RIBI Districts Youth Exchange Association manual](#).

Post exchange evaluation forms for Camps and Tours can be downloaded from section [C\(O\)16](#) of the manual, and for the short term programme from [S14](#) of the [RIBI Districts Youth Exchange Association manual](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the named person in charge of a youth activity

It is essential that there is a named person in charge of every youth activity such as a Youth Exchange programme or a Camp/Tour. The name of that person and the ways in which he or she can be contacted must be made available to all those involved in delivering the activity or activities and to those taking part as participants.

The person will have the main responsibility for ensuring that the activity is well run and that all health, welfare, safety and safeguarding matters are properly managed. It is likely that these responsibilities will be discharged through the work of a committee or team. Nevertheless, the named person must be aware of all aspects and ensure that they are properly carried out.

The principle aspects to be considered and put in place are:

- A successful activity or programme.
- Sound financial arrangements.
- Insurance.
- Agreements with other Rotary Districts and/or Clubs.
- Commercial agreements (for example with activity providers).
- Implementation of the Safeguarding policy and other procedures.
- Health and safety policy and risk assessments.
- Role descriptions, which must include the post-holders responsibilities, for every position, whether voluntary or paid.
- Selecting and checking Rotarians and other staff to work on the activity: including DBS checks when required.
- Selecting and communicating with the participants and their parents, guardians and host Rotary Clubs.
- Having in place arrangement to deal with complaints, expressions of concern, whistle-blowing and allegations.
- Having in place a procedure for moving participant/s into temporary housing if a complaint of abuse or harassment is against a member of the hosting family.
- In an exchange programme or camp, ensuring that the receiving District holds RI Certification.
- On completion, review the activity or programme and report appropriately.