

This document outlines the Certification Requirements to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange. If you have any questions or concerns related to Rotary Youth Exchange, please reach out to youthexchange@rotary.org.

*Pages 1-9 apply to **traditionally certified** (sending and hosting students) districts. Pages 10-16 apply to **outbound-only certified** (sending, not hosting students) districts.*

2023-24 TRADITIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

District Governor Authority

- The district governor is responsible for the supervision and control of the Youth Exchange program within the district. The district Youth Exchange officers, or committees, are under the supervision of their respective governors and report to them.
- Governors are required to complete youth protection training as determined by the general secretary before the start of their term.
- The district complies with the Youth Protection and Rotary Youth Exchange sections of the Rotary Code of Policies ([RCOP](#).)
- Exchanges are arranged within the structure of the district Youth Exchange program.
- The district has a system to ensure club compliance with district Youth Exchange policies.

Youth Protection

- The district has adopted the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth.
- The district has adopted RI's zero-tolerance policy against abuse and harassment.
- The district has developed a procedure for contacting the student's parents or legal guardians as well as the sending district and club once an allegation is brought forth.
- The district has established reporting procedures, ensuring all volunteers understand their responsibility to report incidents to RI, and to ensure that only those who need to know are informed of an allegation in order to protect the privacy

of both the victim and accused during the investigation.

- Any person involved in a Rotary youth program against whom an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment is made must be removed from all contact with youth until the matter is resolved.
- The district has a procedure for moving a student into temporary housing if the accused individual is a member of the student's host family.
- The district has identified appropriate support services for students who report abuse or harassment, including appointment of non-Rotary counselors for each student.
- Any allegation of abuse must be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency not affiliated with Rotary, in accordance with RI's zero-tolerance policy.
- A club must terminate the membership of any individual who admits to, is convicted of or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment of youth or youth program participants.
- A club may not grant membership to a person who is known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment.
- A Rotary member or non-Rotary volunteer who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or sexual harassment or other act of moral turpitude must be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context.
- Districts will maintain confidential records of prohibited individuals and ensure such prohibitions are implemented consistently throughout the district from year-to-year.
- If a district investigation into a claim of sexual abuse or harassment is inconclusive, then, for the safety of youth participants and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. If there are subsequent claims of sexual abuse or harassment, the adult shall be permanently prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. A person who is accused but 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.
- The district will conduct an independent and thorough investigation into any claims of sexual abuse or harassment to determine how to prevent a similar situation in the future.

- The district must develop a crisis management plan that meets RI Board [safety guidelines](#). A crisis management plan must be finalized before any in-person exchanges can take place.
- Due to student safety reasons, a district that loses its certification status during a current exchange year must terminate all inbound exchanges and students must return to their home countries. Outbound students of a district that loses its certification status may complete their exchange with the permission of their natural parents or legal guardians, and their respective host districts.

Legal Entity

- The district has established a corporation or similar formal legal entity that includes the district Youth Exchange program.

Liability Insurance

- The district has secured liability insurance for the district Youth Exchange program with coverage and limits appropriate for its geographic location.

For districts located wholly or partly in the United States, the U.S. Club and District Liability Insurance Program (Program) fulfills liability insurance requirements for the U.S. portion of that district. However, this Program does not apply to the non-authorized Youth Exchange activities or Youth Exchange activities not in compliance with the Rotary Youth Exchange certification program.

Program-specific Requirements

Even if your district is not currently active in each program listed below, your district must comply with the following should it participate in this program in the future.

Long-term Exchange Program

- Exchanges should be for one academic year but may be extended to include part or all of the holiday periods immediately preceding and immediately following the academic year.
- Students should have more than one host family; three successive host families are preferable. In the event that circumstances prevent multiple host family placements, both the sending and host district must agree in advance and alert the student's parent or legal guardian. At least one back-up host family must be available.
- Parents of outbound students are not required to host inbound students. However, parents of outbound students may volunteer to host or may be asked to assist in finding suitable host families.

- The sending and host club selects an individual Rotary counselor to be in regular contact with each student and to serve as a liaison between the student and the club, the student's parents or legal guardians, host family, and community at large. The club counselor must not be in a position of authority over the student's exchange, such as a member of the student's host family, district or club Youth Exchange officer, school principal, etc. The club counselor must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.
- The sending and host club or district requires, at a minimum, quarterly reports from students. This report should include information on their current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions regarding their exchange experience thus far. The designated Youth Exchange officer reviews the reports carefully and, when necessary, takes action to respond to any irregularities reported by the students.

Short-term Exchange Program

- Exchanges vary from several days to several weeks or months. They often take place when school is not in session and usually do not include an academic program; some feature a homestay, camp, or tour component.
- One host family is usually sufficient.
- The sending and host club selects an individual Rotary counselor to be in regular contact with each student and to serve as a liaison between the student and the club, student's parents or legal guardians, host family, and community at large. The club counselor is not in a position of authority over the student's exchange, such as a member of the student's host family, district or club Youth Exchange officer, school principal, etc. The club counselor must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual and psychological abuse.

Virtual Exchange Program

- Virtual exchanges are an alternative to in-person exchanges when travel is not possible.
- Districts must be aware of local laws related to data privacy and internet use involving minors, and provide volunteers and program participants with electronic and online safety training.

Student Application

- Candidates must submit a written application and must undergo a selection process including personal interviews with the applicant and the applicant's parents or legal guardians at the club level and at the district level.

Student Selection and Placement

- The sending district ensures that each student is accepted and hosted by a club in a partner district that has been certified by Rotary International to participate in the Youth Exchange program.
- All individuals involved in the exchange, including students and their parents or legal guardians, host family members, and Rotary counselors, agree in writing to all the requirements of the program as determined by the sending and host clubs or districts.
- Student travel itineraries are agreed upon by the students' parents or legal guardians and the host club or district.

Student Responsibilities

- Students cannot under any circumstances be permitted to operate or drive a motorized vehicle of any kind during the exchange, nor to own a motorized vehicle in the host country.
- Students shall not undertake travel outside the immediate area of the community in which the host club is located without the consent of the students' parents or legal guardians and of the participating clubs or districts.

Student Orientation & Debriefing

- The sending club or district organizes a mandatory orientation for students and their parents or legal guardians prior to departure.
- At orientation participants are informed about the rules, procedures and expectations associated with the Youth Exchange program and includes a briefing about the local Rotary and Rotaract clubs and their activities.
- The sending club or district provides abuse prevention and awareness training for both students and parents/legal guardians.
- The host club or district provides an orientation program for inbound students. The orientation includes guidance for students should they encounter any aspects of neglect, physical, sexual or psychological abuse and contact information for local resources and their appointed counselors.
- Because local laws and customs in one country may differ greatly from those in others, orientation for students includes information on local laws and customs, which may apply to young people.

- Due to the likely effects of reverse culture shock, following their return, students and their parents or legal guardians are encouraged to attend a debriefing meeting for the purpose of assisting them to transition to their home, school, and community environment.

Student Preparation

- The host and sending club or districts provide students with a list of individuals to contact in the case of a problem or emergency. This list must include the name and contact information for the student's:
 - Host club counselor
 - Host club president
 - Host district chair
 - Host district governor
 - Sending club president
 - Sending district chair
 - Sending district governor
 - Two non-Rotary resource persons (one male and one female)
- This list must also include local resources:
 - Medical care
 - Dental care
 - Mental health care
 - Law enforcement professionals
- Where available, this list should also include:
 - Suicide prevention hotlines
 - Rape crisis hotlines
 - Local child protection agencies
 - LGBTQ hotlines
- District provides a 24-hour emergency contact number or other means for ensuring that students can contact a district representative by telephone at all times.

Student Travel Insurance

- Evidence of student travel insurance coverage shall be submitted to, received by, and accepted by the host district prior to the student's departure from home. As the host Rotary district must be in a position to arrange immediate and emergency medical attention when it is needed, the host district must approve that the insurance coverage carried by the student is with a responsible insurance company and will ensure that any service providers receive complete and prompt payment. The parent or legal guardian of the Youth Exchange student is responsible for the payment of all medical and accident costs.

- Partner districts shall determine where there may be gaps in coverage, in any national insurance plans or travel insurance coverage, and identify and purchase supplemental coverage to meet the minimums.
- The parent or legal guardian of each student shall obtain travel insurance, including, but not limited to, medical and dental coverage for accidental injury and illness, repatriation of remains, emergency evacuation, 24-hour emergency assistance services, and personal legal liability. Such amounts shall not be less than the minimum limits and benefits per student designated in the RCOP.
- Parents or legal guardians may also consider obtaining additional travel insurance coverage options designated in the RCOP.
- Where it is a statutory or legal requirement for travel insurance to be purchased in the host country, such insurance shall be in accordance with these limits and benefits. In all other cases dual insurance should be avoided unless agreed to by all parties.
- Clubs and districts are strongly encouraged to consult insurance counsel for advice on obtaining liability insurance and other coverage and should be fully informed about government's policies and regulations regarding foreign students, including insurance coverage requirements.
- Participation in extreme sports, such as hang gliding, rock climbing, and bungee jumping, is discouraged. If students are allowed to participate in extreme sports, these activities should be undertaken with the host districts' and parent or legal guardian's written permission, and additional adequate insurance should be obtained.

Early Returns

- Any participant who does not comply with the requirements of the program is removed from participation in the program.
- The host and sending clubs and districts, host families, and the student's parents or legal guardians, are fully informed prior to the student being sent home. Such decision requires the agreement of the host and sending districts. The student should be returned home at the earliest practical time by a route agreed upon between the parents or legal guardians and the sending district. In the event of an impasse, districts may appoint an independent Rotary member to serve as a mediator.

Reporting to Rotary International

- District submits annual survey to RI.

- All incidents, including but not limited to, accidents, death, early returns, and crimes, and any allegations of abuse or harassment will be reported by the district to RI within 72 hours of the time a district officer learns of the incident. The district has identified a person within the district who will be responsible for reporting to RI.
- Where there is sufficient evidence that an individual, club or district knowingly failed to report an incident as required, the general secretary may determine whether and/or the extent to which involved parties may continue to be eligible to participate in Rotary's youth programs, or whether additional sanctions may be necessary, including but not limited to requiring the club to terminate an individual's membership.

Records & Documents

- The district has a retention policy for student, volunteer, and host family applications and materials related to Youth Exchange.
- The district complies with Rotary International's procedures for use of Rotary Marks as detailed in the most recent Manual of Procedure in district Youth Exchange promotional materials, including any email addresses and/or websites.

Volunteer Selection and Screening

- All adults (Rotary and non-Rotary members) involved in the program, including but not limited to committee members, host families, club counselors, and others, must be interviewed to determine suitability to work with youth, complete and sign a youth volunteer form, and agree to undergo background checks, including law enforcement public record checks and a reference check. Reference checks should entail asking three people about the individual's suitability to work with exchange students. These three people should not be family members and no more than one of the references should be a Rotary member.
- The host club or district conscientiously screens and selects host families on the basis of a written application, background checks for all adults in the home, including law enforcement public record checks and reference checks, personal interview, and home visits. Reference checks should entail asking three people about the individual's suitability to work with exchange students. These three people should not be family members and no more than one of the references should be a Rotary member. Announced and unannounced home visits should take place prior to exchanges and during long-term exchanges.
- Any participant who does not comply with the requirements of the program will be removed from participation in the program. In the case of adult volunteers (both Rotary and non-Rotary members), those who have not complied with program requirements will be permanently removed from involvement with youth in a Rotary context.

- Host families should carry personal liability and auto liability insurance with appropriate limits for their geographic location.

Volunteer Training

- The district Youth Exchange policy outlines the content and frequency of training, participants who must receive training, who has the responsibility for arranging and conducting training, and how records of participation are maintained.
- All adults (Rotary and non-Rotary members) involved in the program, including but not limited to committee members, host families, club counselors, and others, receive training that includes information on program administration and rules, and abuse and harassment awareness and prevention.

Program Evaluation

- All certified districts are subject to an in-person and/or virtual program evaluation.

2023-24 OUTBOUND-ONLY CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

District Governor Authority

- The district governor is responsible for the supervision and control of the Youth Exchange program within the district. The district Youth Exchange officers, or committees, are under the supervision of their respective governors and report to them.
- Governors are required to complete youth protection training as determined by the general secretary before the start of their term.
- The district complies with the Youth Protection and Rotary Youth Exchange sections of the Rotary Code of Policies (RCOP.)
- Exchanges are arranged within the structure of the district Youth Exchange program.
- The district has a system to ensure club compliance with district Youth Exchange policies.

Youth Protection

- The district has adopted the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth.
- The district has adopted RI's zero-tolerance policy against abuse and harassment.
- The district has developed a procedure for contacting the student's parents or legal guardians as well as the involved district and club once an allegation is brought forth.
- The district has established reporting procedures, ensuring all volunteers understand their responsibility to report incidents to RI, and to ensure that only those who need to know are informed of the allegation in order to protect the privacy of both the victim and accused during the investigation.
- Any person involved in a Rotary youth program against whom an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment is made must be removed from all contact with youth until the matter is resolved.
- The district has identified appropriate support services for students who report abuse or harassment, including appointment of non-Rotary counselors for each student.

- Any allegation of abuse must be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency not affiliated with Rotary, in accordance with RI's zero-tolerance policy.
- A club must terminate the membership of any individual who admits to, is convicted of or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment of youth or youth program participants.
- A club may not grant membership to a person who is known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment.
- A Rotary member or non-Rotary volunteer who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment or other act of moral turpitude must be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context.
- Districts will maintain confidential records of prohibited individuals and ensure such prohibitions are implemented consistently throughout the district from year-to-year.
- If a district investigation into a claim of sexual abuse or harassment is inconclusive, then, for the safety of youth participants and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. If there are subsequent claims of sexual abuse or harassment, the adult shall be permanently prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. A person who is accused but 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.
- The district will conduct an independent and thorough investigation into any claims of sexual abuse or harassment to determine how to prevent a similar situation in the future.
- The district must develop a crisis management plan that meets RI Board [safety guidelines](#). A crisis management plan must be finalized before any in-person exchanges can take place.
- Outbound students of a district that loses its certification status may complete their exchange with the permission of their natural parents or legal guardians, and their respective host districts.

Program-specific Requirements

Even if your district is not currently active in each program listed below, your district must comply with the following should it participate in this program in the future.

Long-term Exchange Program

- Exchanges should be for one academic year but may be extended to include part or all of the holiday periods immediately preceding and immediately following the academic year.
- The sending club selects an individual Rotary counselor to be in regular contact with the outbound student and to serve as a liaison between the student and the club, the student's parents or guardians, and community at large. The club counselor must not be in a position of authority over the student's exchange, such as a district or club Youth Exchange officer. The club counselor must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.
- The sending club or district requires, at a minimum, quarterly reports from outbound students. This report should include information on their current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions regarding their exchange experience thus far. The designated Youth Exchange officer reviews the reports carefully and, when necessary, takes actions to respond to any irregularities report by the students.

Short-term Exchange Program

- Exchanges vary from several days to several weeks or months. They often take place when school is not in session and usually do not include an academic program; some feature a homestay, camp, or tour component.
- The sending club selects an individual Rotary counselor to be in regular contact with the outbound student and to serve as a liaison between the student and the club, the student's parents or guardians, and community at large. The club counselor must not be in a position of authority over the student's exchange, such as a district or club Youth Exchange officer. The club counselor must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Virtual Exchange Program

- Virtual exchanges are an alternative to in-person exchanges when travel is not possible.
- Districts must be aware of local laws related to data privacy and internet use involving minors, and provide volunteers and program participants with electronic and online safety training.
- Outbound-only districts interested in "hosting" virtual exchange students must submit an additional youth [protection attestation form](#) to RI.

Student Application

- Candidates must submit a written application and must undergo a selection process including personal interviews with the applicant and the applicant's parents or legal guardians at the club level and at the district level.

Student Selection and Placement

- The sending district ensures that each student is accepted and hosted by a club in a partner district that has been certified by Rotary International to participate in the Youth Exchange program.
- All individuals involved in the exchange, including students and their parents or legal guardians and Rotary counselors, agree in writing to all the requirements of the program as determined by the sending and host clubs or districts.
- Student travel itineraries are agreed upon by the students' parents or legal guardians and the host club or district.

Student Orientation & Debriefing

- The sending club or district organizes a mandatory orientation for students and their parents or legal guardians prior to departure.
- At outbound orientation participants are informed about the rules, procedures and expectations associated with the Youth Exchange program and includes a briefing about the local Rotary and Rotaract clubs and their activities.
- The sending club or district provides abuse prevention and awareness training for both students and parents or legal guardians.
- Due to the likely effects of reverse culture shock, following their return, students and their parents or legal guardians are encouraged to attend a debriefing meeting for the purpose of assisting them to transition to their home, school, and community environment.

Student Preparation

- The sending club or district provides students with a list of individuals to contact in the case of a problem or emergency. This list must include the name and contact information for the student's:
 - Sending club counselor
 - Sending club president
 - Sending district chair
 - Sending district governor

Student Travel Insurance

- Evidence of student travel insurance coverage shall be submitted to, received by, and accepted by the host district prior to the student's departure from home. As the host Rotary district must be in a position to arrange immediate and emergency medical attention when it is needed, the host district must approve that the insurance coverage carried by the student is with a responsible insurance company and will ensure that any service providers receive complete and prompt payment. The parent or legal guardian of the Youth Exchange student is responsible for the payment of all medical and accident costs.
- Partner districts shall determine where there may be gaps in coverage, in any national insurance plans or travel insurance coverage, and identify and purchase supplemental coverage to meet the minimums.
- The parent or legal guardian of each student shall obtain travel insurance, including, but not limited to, medical and dental coverage for accidental injury and illness, repatriation of remains, emergency evacuation, 24-hour emergency assistance services, and personal legal liability. Such amounts shall not be less than the minimum limits and benefits per student designated in the RCOP.
- Parents or legal guardians may also consider obtaining additional travel insurance coverage options designated in the RCOP.
- Where it is a statutory or legal requirement for travel insurance to be purchased in the host country, such insurance shall be in accordance with these limits and benefits. In all other cases dual insurance should be avoided unless agreed to by all parties.
- Clubs and districts are strongly encouraged to consult insurance counsel for advice on obtaining liability insurance and other coverage and should be fully informed about government's policies and regulations regarding foreign students, including insurance coverage requirements.
- Participation in extreme sports, such as hang gliding, rock climbing, and bungee jumping, is discouraged. If students are allowed to participate in extreme sports, these activities should be undertaken with the host districts' and parent or legal guardian's written permission, and additional adequate insurance should be obtained.

Early Returns

- Any participant who does not comply with the requirements of the program is removed from participation in the program.
- The host and sending clubs and districts, host families and the student's parents or legal guardians, are fully informed prior to the student being sent home. Such

decision requires the agreement of the host and sending districts. The student should be returned home at the earliest practical time by a route agreed upon between the parents or legal guardians and the sending district. In the event of an impasse, districts may appoint an independent Rotary member to serve as a mediator.

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- District submits annual survey to RI.
- All incidents, including but not limited to, accidents, death, early returns, and crimes, and any allegations of abuse or harassment will be reported by the district to RI within 72 hours of the time a district officer learns of the incident. The district has identified a person within the district who will be responsible for reporting to RI.
- Where there is sufficient evidence that an individual, club or district knowingly failed to report an incident as required, the general secretary may determine whether and/or the extent to which involved parties may continue to be eligible to participate in Rotary's youth programs, or whether additional sanctions may be necessary, including but not limited to requiring the club to terminate an individual's membership.

Records & Documents

- The district has a retention policy for student and volunteer applications and materials related to Youth Exchange.
- The district complies with Rotary International's procedures for use of Rotary Marks as detailed in the most recent Manual of Procedure in district Youth Exchange promotional materials, including any email addresses and/or websites.

Volunteer Selection and Screening

- All adults (Rotary and non-Rotary members) involved in the program, including but not limited to committee members, sending club counselors, and others, must be interviewed to determine suitability to work with youth, complete and sign a youth volunteer form, and agree to undergo a reference check. Reference checks should entail asking three people about the individual's suitability to work with exchange students. These three people should not be family members and no more than one of the references should be a Rotary member.
- Any participant who does not comply with the requirements of the program will be removed from participation in the program. In the case of adult volunteers (both Rotary and non-Rotary members), those who have not complied with program requirements will be permanently removed from involvement with youth in a Rotary context.

Volunteer Training

- The district Youth Exchange policy outlines the content and frequency of training, participants who must receive training, who has the responsibility for arranging and conducting training, and how records of participation are maintained.
- All adults (Rotary and non-Rotary members) involved in the program, including but not limited to committee members, sending club counselors, and others, receive training that includes information on program administration and rules, and abuse and harassment awareness and prevention.

Program Evaluation

- All certified districts are subject to an in-person and/or virtual program evaluation.